



From
Adam
to
Muhammad
(PEACE BE UPON THEM)

Abdur Rehman Shad

ABOUT THE BOOK

A remarkably informative book about the lives and times of all the prominent Prophets of Allah from the Prophet Adam to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them).



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INTRODUCTION

The present book, authored by Abdur Rahman Shad, fulfils an acute necessity. To the readers, it presents a number of utilities, such as :

(1) The Correct Picture : Allāh Almighty, in His Infinite Wisdom, has chosen to preserve the records of various Prophets in the Holy Qur'ān, not a book of history in itself but nonetheless the most authentic chronicle of the days of the prophets, mostly the days of pre-history. The New and Old Testaments do mention some of them. But since the Testaments themselves are based on farfetched hearsay evidence, the true picture has been distorted beyond recognition. The originals have been long lost ; what is left is the English versions ranging from the days of King James First of England. And each translation, century after century, has taken pains to tailor the facts to suit its ends. The process is still going on.

Since the present book has taken facts from no source other than the Holy Qur'ān, quoting the text as and where required, the English reading public will, I am sure, get the correct picture.

(2) Islam Versus Science : It is said Science is non-objective, non-political. It takes no side. It has no axe of its own to grind. But that claim is false.

Modern Science follows the line of policy chalked out by its patrons, the material West. Let us take the Darwin's Theory of Evolution, for example.

This theory was propounded in the early days of Queen Victoria when the British Empire was firmly established in India and elsewhere. Its so-called law of the Survival Of The Fittest was given all publicity just to justify and legalise the British occupation in so many parts of the world. It was given all publicity just to advertise the British as the fittest and to instil into other nations a feeling of inferiority complex.

On the very face of it, this Darwin's theory is no science ; it suffers from a number of jolts and jerks.

For argument's sake, even if we suppose that the homo sapiens came out of a germ, passing through so many stages of evolution, the theory doesn't solve WHO created so many things of the Universe with their intrinsic properties and process of inter-movements making that evolution possible. For its political purposes, Science doesn't choose to discuss WHO and WHY. It discusses no more than WHAT and HOW. If it would discuss WHO and WHY, it cannot but reach Islam. That is Why it doesn't.

Even if we suppose that man has come out of ape, and that is the normal procedure of nature, we would surely come across apes in various stages of conversion. But nowhere such an ape is to be found. And no such half-ape half-man has ever been found in the last 5,000 years since we have good history.

The perfect scientific theory has been set forth by the Holy Qur'ān. The first man with complete physical, intellectual and moral machinery was directly created in the Heavens by the Almighty Creator. His creation, his marriage, his sinning in the Heavens, his obtainment of divine pardon, his elevation to prophethood, his entrance into this world, his efforts towards the propagation of the *Deen* of Islam, are all indisputable history. The first man of Darwin is lost in mystery. The first man of Islam is in open daylight.

In the realm of scientific research too, the present treatise of the author sets the record right.

(3) Evolution of the Shari'ah : Of course, man started life on this earth in all simplicity. The complexities and problems have grown stage by stage. So the *Shari'ah* (the Do's and Don'ts, the Whys and Hows of Islam) came down stage by stage, each stage is represented by a prophet, until at last it came to finality with our Final Prophet, Hadrat Muhammad Mustafa, Allāh's blessings be on him ever and ever.

A study of the prophets, in chronological order, is a study of the evolution of society with all its good people and bad, its expanding religions and worships, politics and administrations, social psychologies and customs, material wants and goods. It shows how a particular prophet suits his time and clime, how he plays his role to bring the beguiled lots to the Correct Path, what trials and tribulations had he to undergo for the sake of delivering the Divine

Message, what qualities of head, heart and hand were he and his companions endowed with.

Very illuminating and educating stories based on solid hard facts. They are records of the various stages of the eternal life-and-death struggle of supremacy between the forces of Right and Wrong, *Haq* and *Bātil*. What better literature can there be?

(4) Evolution of Jihad Fi Sabil-Lil-Lah: The life-and-death struggle for supremacy between the forces of *Haq* and the forces of *Bātil* has come from the days of Hadrat Adam and will last till the Day of Divine Judgment. Conditions and environments differ as per time and clime. So the laws of *Jihad* (cold and hot war against evil) have developed stage by stage till the perfect code was demonstrated by the Prophet of Islam in words as well as in practical performance.

Jihad is the *sine qua non* of Islam. It is the acme perfecting all forms of '*Ibādah* (worship). In the body politic of '*Ibādāh*, it is like the heart to which all bad blood converge and from which all good blood radiate. It is the acid-test of '*Imān* (Faith). It is the soul of all '*Ibādah*, giving a new personality to the *Mumin*.

A study of the prophets shows how the science of *Jihad* has developed down the ages.

(5) Model Personalities: The Do's and Don'ts of Islam (The *Awamir* and the *Nawahis*) are not just stray nomad wanderers, a jot here and a jot there. No system, no organisation. They are vital parts of

a complete machinery, inter-connected, inter-locked, with vital give-and-take each to each. The *Shari'ah* is a perfect machinery of minds and morals leading to positive and negative actions in a set plan, programme and purpose. All other schools of thought, religious or otherwise, have, if at all, no more than loose threads. Christianity and Hinduism, to name only two, have absolutely no Do's and no Don'ts.

The study of prophets is the study of model personalities. It shows the growth of commandments of Islam and how were they performed in the teeth of opposition. It shows that merits are called for towards *Tableegh*, *Tanzeem*, *Jihad* and *Sabr* and, in the case of the Prophet of Islam, politics, government, administration, commerce, sociology, family, national and international relations also. It is a study of what makes success or failure from the Islamic viewpoint. It is not just an academic study meant for information, inference or just pleasure. The study of the records of the prophets, particularly the Final, is an invitation (nay, Divine Command) to play the same part, to sacrifice our individual interests for the sake of the good of the *Millat* and the *Akhuwat*.

(6) Political Movement : Islam is not just a record of the past. It presents the past to serve as guide to the present and to the future. It is dynamic action, yesterday, today and tomorrow. It is a cold and hot war against the evil-thinkers and the evil-doers, the *Kuffar* and the *Munafiqeen*. It is *Jihad* not so much against individuals or society as against government since all good and all evil emanate from

the government, are supported by the government or are spearheaded by the government. It is co-operation if the government is Islamic. It is opposition if the government is non-Islamic. It is an agitation, a slow but steady revolution, a civil and military struggle for supremacy to dethrone the evil and to enthrone the good, in short, to enforce the Nizam-i-Islam, better called the Nizam-i-Mustafa.

The life of each prophet is hundred per cent political. All other aspects are no more than towers of support. But the centripetal and the centrifugal core and kernel is the political movement which never abides till full success. You may study political science here or there but for a study of scientific politics, you will have to go to the prophets.

(7) Constitution and Laws : Beginning from the days of the First Prophet, the constitution and code of Islam has developed, stage to stage, to the final point in the days of the Final Prophet. These laws govern each sector of life—private, national, international—at all levels in all conditions, anywhere, anytime.

The study of the efforts and achievements of the prophets, as the present book shows, gives an insight into the historical growth of Islamic jurisprudence with all its Whys and Hows. It is what has been built up down the ages by the Companions of the Prophet of Islam, their successors, the jurists and judges. It shows how to deal with problems cropping up tomorrow.

All those who have to deal with law and justice cannot mature their brain without a study of the growth of Islamic jurisprudence. A study of the prophets is a right step in the right direction.

Mr. Abdur Rahman Shad is to be praised for his love's labour in the cause of the knowledge of Islam through this piece of research. May we all live and die as full Muslims, in thought and in action, in peace and in *Jihad*, cold or hot. *Amin*.

Maulana Asadul Qadri

THE PROPHET ADAM

(peace be upon him)

Adam is an Arabic word for man. He was the progenitor of human race. He is reckoned to be the first prophet by the Muslims. He was also the first man whom Almighty Allāh had created from the elements of clay. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

“O’ mankind ! Surely We created you from dust.” (30 : 20)

The gradual process of man’s physical development has been referred to in the following Verses of the Holy Qur’ān :

“He began the creation of man from dust. Then He made his progeny of an extract of water held in light esteem. Then He made him complete and breathed into him of His spirit and made for you ears and eyes and heart.” (32 : 7-9)

According to the latest scientific researches the man has been created from clay with all its elements, and their inherent properties. It is discovered by a chemical analysis of the human body that a defect occurs in its normal functioning when the quantity of any of these element gets diminished. In such case vitamins are used to supplement the deficiency and restore normal health.

The Creation of Prophet Adam : Before the creation of mortal, Almighty Allāh directed all the angels to assemble. Thousands upon thousands of angels (created from light) and Jinns (created from fire) gathered in groups. They bowed respectfully in the presence of Almighty Allāh. The Creator of the universe declared that he intended to create the man and sought their counsel. The angels and Iblis (Satan) disapproved the idea and pointed out that human beings would cause disorder on the earth. They would make mischief and shed blood indiscriminately. The Holy Qur'ān gives a description of this event in the following Verses :

“And when your Lord said to the angels : I am about to appoint a vicegerent in the earth. They said : Will you place therein such as will cause disorder in it or shed blood ? We celebrate your praise and extol your holy names. He answered : I know what you know not.” (2 : 30)

Angels were asked to make Obeisance to Adam : Allāh taught Adam the names of all things and inculcated into his mind the knowledge of their properties. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“And He taught Adam the names of all things ; then presenting them to the angels, He said : Tell Me the names of these if you are right.” (2 : 31)

The angels did not know their names and said :

“Glory be to You. We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Surely, You are Knowing, the Wise.” (2 : 32)

After that Allāh questioned Adam in the presence of all angels about the names of different objects. He gave correct answers on the basis of this superiority. Allāh asked all the angels to bow as a mark of respect to Adam who was created so miraculously. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

“O’ angels ! Fall down making obeisance to Adam ” (15 : 29)

Angels Prostrated but Iblis Refused : When the angels heard the Commandment of Almighty Allāh, they all complied without hesitation. They bowed with respect and admiration to the new creation and that was Adam. However *Iblis* (Satan) did not surrender on various pretexts and stood still. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“And when We said to the angels : Make obeisance to Adam, they did obeisance, not so *Iblis*, he refused and was haughty and he was of the rejectors.” (2 : 34)

Challenge of Iblis : *Iblis* disobeyed Allāh and became defiant. He arrogantly refused to accept the authority of a creature who was made of rubbish. *Iblis* thought himself superior to human being. As a result, God expelled Satan from the Garden of Bliss and deprived him of all Divine favours. Satan requested Almighty Allāh to allow him to exist until the Day of Judgment. I would bring most of the descendants of Adam under my sway. I would lead them astray from the Right Path. Allāh gave him respite. The conversation between God and *Iblis* has been narrated in the Holy Qur'ān as follows :

“*Iblis* said : Give me respite till the Resurrection Day. Allāh said : Be you among those who are given respite. He said : Because You have thrown me out of the way, I will certainly lie in wait for them on Your Straight Path. Then I will assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, nor will You find most of them grateful.” (7 : 14-18)

Devil is, in fact, an evil spirit which tempts the man to indulge in sins. It invites the heart to do bad deeds and disobey Allāh. It tries to weaken our sense of morality but if we are spiritually too strong to yield to its temptations, we become immune from all sins. Those who follow the Commandments of Allāh, invite God's grace to protect them. On the other hand those who deliberately follow the wrong way, are responsible because they put themselves into the hands of Evil Spirit.

Hawwa Created : In order to remove the loneliness of Adam, a female mate named Hawwā (Eve) was created. The Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) and his wife Hawwā were given a place in the Garden (of Bliss) to reside. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

“And O' Adam ! Dwell you and your wife in the Garden (of Bliss) and eat therefrom wherever you will but approach not this tree lest you should be among the wrong-doers.” (7 : 20)

Trial of Prophet Adam : The Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) and his wife Eve continued

enjoying each others company and carefully avoiding that specific prohibited tree. *Iblis* became very jealous when he saw the favours of the Almighty Allāh on the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) and began to devise ways and means to humiliate them. He kept on making evil suggestions to the couple in a sneaky way. He tried to persuade them to approach the prohibited tree. One day the *Iblis* sympathetically said to them :

“Your Lord has only forbidden you this tree lest you should become angels or immortals, and he swore to them saying : Surely, I am a sincere counsellor unto you. So he beguiled them by deceit.” (7 : 22)

On hearing this both Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) and Eve became curious. They started wondering as to why God did not want them to approach the specific tree. This temptation gradually became stronger but Allāh guided them aright and warned that not to be taken in by the evil suggestions of *Iblis*. The Holy Qur’ān says :

“Then We said : O’ Adam ! Verily, this *Iblis* is an enemy to you and your wife, so let him not get you both out of the Garden so that you are landed in misery.” (20 : 117)

The Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) and his wife used to live happily in the Garden of Bliss. They were endowed with the knowledge to discriminate between good and evil. They were also warned of the power of evil. They overpowered all

sorts of evil temptations at first and tried hard to ward off the influence of Satan. But he made numerous attempts to misguide them off and on. Finally Satan succeeded in his mission and made them approach that specific tree. Instantly evil consequences appeared. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“When they both tasted of the tree, their private parts became manifest to each other and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the trees (in the garden), and their Lord called them saying : Did I not forbid you both from that tree and tell you that Satan was your avowed enemy. They said : Our Lord ! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your mercy, we shall surely be of the losers.” (7 : 23, 24)

The Prophet Adam and Hawwa Feel Penitence :
The Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) and Eve followed the temptations of *Iblis* and were deprived of the heavenly bliss. They were, however, overflooded with grief. They requested Almighty Allāh to forgive them. Allāh, the Most Merciful accepted their repentance and chose them for His mercy. At the same time He dispelled them from the Garden of Bliss. They became ordinary people. They had to live like us for only a certain span of life on this earth. They would be recreated again to be judged for their actions on the Day of Judgment.

Allah gives Directions : They lived for many years. Allāh sent directions and guidance to the

Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). He taught others about the religion of Allāh. He advised his followers to do good and avoid evils. He told the people to act upon the Commandments of Allāh and follow his guidance. It would serve the purpose of shield to do away with the attacks of the devil. Allāh says :

“Whoso shall follow My Guidance, on them shall come no fear, nor shall they grieve. But those who will disbelieve and treat Our Signs as lies, they shall be the inmates of the fire and they shall abide therein.” (2 : 39, 40)

THE PROPHET SHETH (peace be upon him)

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Sheth was the third son of the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). When he was born, his father, the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), had attained the age of 130 years. Allāh conferred upon him the honour of prophethood after his father. It is said that Allāh revealed to him fifty small portions of scripture. When the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) was on death bed, he appointed Sheth as his successor and advised his descendants to follow him and live peacefully in perfect harmony. He tried to guide his followers on the right path but some of them were depraved by the Satan. They began to worship his self-made portrait. He passed away at the age of 912 years. Anūsh, his son won a remarkable position after him. In the fourth century there existed in the Egypt a sect of gnostics, calling themselves Sethians. They regarded Sheth as a divine emanation.

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THE PROPHET IDRIS

(peace be upon him)

As a result of the efforts of the Prophet Sheth (peace be upon him) some people began to believe in Allāh. As the time passed they began to worship the statue of their prophet. They became polytheists, irreligious and faithless. They adopted indecent ways of life. Under such circumstances Allāh sent the Prophet Idris (peace be upon him) for the reformation and guidance of those who had gone astray. The Holy Qur'ān makes mention of him in the following Verse :

“Commemorate Idris in the Book, verily he was a man of truth and a Prophet and We raised him to a lofty station.” (19 : 56)

Preaching and Opposition : The Prophet Idris (peace be upon him) preached monotheism. He directed his people to abandon idol-worship. He emphasized them not to be captivated by the love of wealth and property. He advised them to abstain from drinking wine and other intoxicants. Only a few men paid heed to his teachings but majority of the people opposed him bitterly. The Prophet Idris (peace be upon him) did not lose heart and continued preaching with unshakable constancy. He is appreciated for his firm faith and forbearance in the following Verses of the Holy Qur'ān :

“All (Ismā'il, Dhul-Kifl and Idris) were men of constancy and patience. We admitted them into Our mercy, for they were of the righteous ones.” (21 : 85, 86)

Migration to Egypt : In spite of untiring efforts the Prophet Idris (peace be upon him) could not attain considerable success and felt disgusted with the indifferent attitude of the public. He was directed to migrate to Egypt and settle on the bank of the river Nile. He preached the religion of Allāh among various tribes and admonished them to be good and civilized. Consequently he brought about a remarkable change in the moral and social life of the people.

Some Sayings of the Prophet Idris : His lectures were full of admonition and good advice. Some of his sayings are given below :

1. Do not feel jealous of the prosperity of others.
2. He who has unlimited desires, is deprived of the wealth of contentment.
3. One should be sincere in acts of devotion.
4. It is an act of grave sin to take false oaths.
5. Patience is a key to victory.
6. He who controls his passions, is fortunate. Only a good act will be a living intercessor before Allāh on the Day of Judgment.
7. One who is desirous of attaining perfection in knowledge, should have no concern with immoral acts.

The Learned Prophet : The Prophet Idris (peace be upon him) was born one hundred years after the death of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). He was the first man who learnt to write. It is said that thirty portions of Allāh's sacred scriptures were revealed to him. He was the inventor of the science of astronomy and arithmetic.

Death Event : The Prophet Idris (peace be upon him) was taken alive to Heavens at the age of 365 years. Ibn Jarir relates in *Rauzatul Ahibab* that the Prophet Idris (peace be upon him) was the special friend of one of the angels of heaven. The angel took him up into the heavens and when they arrived in the fourth heaven, they met the Angel of Death. The angel questioned the Angel of Death how many years there were remaining of the life of the Prophet Idris (peace be upon him). The Angel of Death said: Where is Idris because I have been commanded to end his life. The Prophet Idris (peace be upon him) then remained in the fourth heaven and he died in the wings of his angel friend who had taken him from earth.

Mutwaslah was one of his distinguished son who made his mark.

THE PROPHET NUH

(peace be upon him)

Moral Degradation : The Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) had left his progeny in a state of social and moral health but gradually they began to forget the teachings of Allāh. They adopted the wrong path and indulged in corruption and depravity. They became mean, evil-doers and greedy. They cheated and hurt one another. They began to worship idols and forgot to pray to Almighty Allāh. The entire society had been split up into different sections and this state of affairs had given birth to oppression and injustice.

The Advent of Prophet Nuh : Under these circumstances Allāh, the Most Merciful, wanted the people to be good again. He sent Nūh as His apostle for the reclamation of the depraved humanity dwelling in that part of the earth which is called 'Irāq in the present era. Those people believed in Allāh but they associated other gods with Allāh, the Supreme. The priests of these deities exercised great control over all affairs. The people offered sacrifices in the name of their deities to please them. They spent the money lavishly and thus their condition became miserable. The Prophet Nūh (peace be upon him) like other prophets was sincere, pious, patient and trustworthy. He was strong in his

will and determination. Angel Gabriel (Jibrā'il) conveyed him the teachings from Allāh. He was commanded to reform the people who had been led astray by the Satan. He kept on preaching the faith of Allāh and directed the people to pray to One God. He advised them to refrain from doing evil deeds. The Holy Qur'ān affirms his endeavours to reform his people in the following Verses :

“He (Nūḥ) said : Q' my people ! serve Allāh. There is no god other than Him. If you refuse, verily I fear for you chastisement of a grievous day. The Chiefs of his people said : Most certainly we perceive you in clear error. He said : O' my people ! There is no error in me but I am an Apostle from the Lord of the worlds. I deliver to you the message of my Lord and I counsel you right.” (7 : 59, 60) .

Again in the following Verses the Prophet Nūḥ (peace be upon him) warned his people by declaring :

“O' my people ! Surely I am a plain warner to you bidding you to serve Allāh and be mindful of your duty to Him, and obey me so that He may forgive your faults.” (71 : 2-4)

The Prophet Nuh was opposed : Most of the people did not believe in the Prophet Nūḥ (peace be upon him). They made fun of him and ridiculed him as a mad man. Whenever he tried to convey the message of Allāh to them, they began to thrust their fingers into their ears. They persisted in their infidelity and proudly disdained his counsel to do

good deeds. The people were so stubborn under the influence of their priests that they paid no heed to the message of Allāh and their aversion rapidly increased. At last in sheer disgust the Prophet Nūh (peace be upon him) had to cry out :

“My Lord ! Leave not upon land any dweller from among the disbelievers. For surely if You leave them, they will lead astray Your servants and will not beget any but immoral ungrateful offspring.

My Lord ! Forgive me and my parents and him who enters my house believing, and the believing males and females and do not increase the unjust in aught but destruction.” (71 : 26-28)

Preparation of an Ark : Consequently Almighty Allāh answered the prayer of Prophet Nūh (peace be upon him) by asking him to build an ark (a very big boat). The Prophet Nūh (peace be upon him) knew that Allāh planned to drown all those sinners who had rejected His Commandments. He began to build the ark with the help of his followers. They went on working constantly from dawn to dusk. When the boat began to take shape, the disbelievers made fun of them. The transgressors thought that the Prophet Nūh (peace be upon him) and his followers were becoming crazy and were losing their balance of mind. The Holy Qur’ān says :

“And he began to build the ark and whenever the chiefs among his people passed by him, they deride him but he said : Though you scoff

at us now, we will scoff at you in Hereafter.”
(11 : 38)

Calamity befalls : When the big ark was completed, the sky became cloudy. It started to rain in torrents. The streams became bulging with water. The Valleys were in the grip of flood. There was water everywhere. The lightning was frightening and the thunder made the hearts pound fast. Every one was scared and worried except the Prophet Nūḥ (peace be upon him) and his followers. The Holy Qur’ān gives the description of this terrible deluge in the following Verses :

“So We opened the gates of the heavens with water pouring down and We caused the earth to gush forth its springs, so the water of the heavens and the earth gathered together according to measure already ordained.”
(54 : 11, 12)

The Prophet Nūḥ (peace be upon him) called on his family and followers to embark the boat. They came rushing to the ark. There was a special place in the boat for all the animates including human beings and their animals. The ark sailed amid waves like mountains while the streams of water were rising fast and filling many houses with water through the windows and the doors. Many houses collapsed and dashed to the ground. Some of them tried to swim but in vain. They were in a pathetic condition but they deserved it. The son of Nūḥ was separated from him because he was an evil-doer. The Prophet

Nūḥ (peace be upon him) prayed to his Lord and said :

“Surely, my son belongs to my family and Your promise is true. Allāh said : Surely, he is not of your family. He is of evil conduct, therefore ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge.” (11 : 45, 46)

In the meantime the water rose higher and higher. The whole area was under the sway of flood and all the disbelievers were drowned. The Prophet Nūḥ (peace be upon him) and his followers were safe and sound in the ark which was floating without any obstruction of huge waves. Finally the rain stopped and the water abated. The sky became clear.

The Prophet Nuh and his Followers Remain Safe :
The Prophet Nūḥ (peace be upon him) and his believers sheltered in a safe place. They built new houses and worked hard in the fields. The next generation which sprang up from the survived believers included God-fearing persons. They worshipped one God and acted according to His teachings. The Prophet Nūḥ (peace be upon him) lived for about 950 years. After this dreadful destruction the people abstained from committing sins for sometime. Afterwards they began to be loose in their actions.

THE PROPHET HUD

(peace be upon him)

Hūd was the Prophet sent to the Bani 'Ād for their reformation. His lineage genealogy joins with the Prophet Nūḥ (peace be upon him) and his sons. The Propret Hūd (peace be upon him) belonged to the Bani 'Ād. They were the descendants of Sam.

Outstanding Qualities of the 'Adites : The 'Ādites quarrelled with the children of Ham and left Babylon. They peopled a district in southern Arabia contiguous to 'Ummān, Yaman and Ḥaḍramaūt. There they built palaces, erected temples and worshipped deities and stars. The names of their chief deities were Sāqi'ah, Salimah, Raziqah and Ḥāfīzūn. The people belong to the Bani 'Ād were tall in stature and were skilful masons. Allāh had given them abundance of wealth, cattle, children and gardens. They had attained a considerable degree of civilization. Among them flourished the famous king Shaddād. He built a magnificent palace near 'Adan. It was known as the Garden of Iram. He was mighty king and his conquests extended to Syria, 'Irāq and the frontier of Sub-continent of Indo-Pakistan. These people were proud of their achievements and considered themselves to be invincible. They were indulged in sins and committed acts of injustice and violence. Instead of expressing

a deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty Allāh for the favours He had bestowed upon them, they became transgressors and showed disobedience to Him.

The Prophet Hud Appears and Preaches : The Prophet Hūd (peace be upon him) appeared among them for their guidance. He tried his best to bring them back to the worship of One God. He directed them to give up evil practices. He advised them to abstain from committing sins. They paid no heed to the teachings and warnings of their Prophets. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“And to the ‘Ād We sent their brother Hūd. He said : O’ my people ! Serve Allāh, you have no god other than Him. Will you not then keep away from evil and be mindful of your duty to Him. The Chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said : Most surely, we see you in folly and indeed we think you to be of the liars. He said : O’ my people ! There is no folly in me but I am an Apostle of the Lord of the Worlds. I convey to you the message of my Lord and I am a sincere adviser to you.” (7 : 65)

The Deluge is Descended : The people did not listen to him and disobeyed the Commandments of Allāh. For this disobedience the wrath of Allāh came down upon them. A drought of unusual severity and a violent storm nearly annihilated the majority of the people of the Bani ‘Ād. The Holy Qur'ān describes :

“As to the ‘Ād, they were destroyed by a roaring violent blast which He made to prevail over them for seven nights and eight days unintermittingly so that you mightest have seen the people therein prostrate as if they were hollow trunks of palm-tree.” (69 : 6, 7)

This storm had such a devastating effect as all the proud and disobedient people were completely destroyed but the Prophet Hūd (peace be upon him) and his followers remained safe and sound. The Holy Qur’ān says :

“So We delivered him and those with him by mercy from Us and We cut off the last of those who treated Our Signs as lies and were disbelievers.” (7 : 72)

Afterwards the remnant who survived established themselves in Yaman. The grave of the Prophet Hūd (peace be upon him) is in Ḥaḍramaut. It is visited by the Arabs in the month of Rajab.

THE PROPHET SĀLIḤ (peace be upon him)

Sālih was sent as a Prophet to the Bani Thamūd to rectify their depraved people. The Thamūdites were the descendants of Thamūd, a grandson of Sām. They lived in wādi al-Qurā and al-Ḥajr between Syria and Hijāz. They worshipped idols and thought them very powerful. They believed that their idols provided them with food and rain, preserved them from all dangers and restored them to health when they were ill. This tribe flourished more than two centuries after 'Ād. Its people were famous for their longevity and enormous bulk. They built spacious buildings in the caves of the mountains and attained considerable powers.

Slaughtering of She-Camel : The Prophet Sālih (peace be upon him) was commissioned by Allāh to invite the tribe to the worship of One God but they turned a deaf ear to his preachings. Whenever the Prophet Sālih (peace be upon him) spoke ill of their deities, they behave impudently towards him. At last they hatched a plan to put him to death. Allāh fixed a she-camel as a sign and warned them that if they slew her, they would be overtaken by the chastisement from Allāh. There is nothing strange in fixing she-camel as a sign. It is an admitted fact that Ka'ba, a constructed House, is one of the signs

of Allāh. Whoso tries to destroy it, perishes himself. Similarly she-camel was one of the signs of God. The Prophet Sālih (peace be upon him) demanded that she should be allowed to graze in the pastures and drink water from the springs. The stubborn people slaughtered the she-camel provided by God while it was grazing in the pastures.

Chastisements Befalls : When they were about to execute their final plan against Prophet Sālih (peace be upon him), they were destroyed by God's punishment. A visitation befell them and they were exterminated by volcanic eruption which showered stones upon them. The calamity which overtook the Bani Thamūd was very terrible.

Description in the Holy Qur'an : Some references regarding the Prophet Sālih (peace be upon him) and his people are as under :

"And to the Thamūd We sent their brother Sālih. He said : O' my people : Serve Allāh. You have no god other than Him. Clear proof, indeed, has come to you from your Lord. This is as Allāh's she-camel for you, a sign. Therefore, leave her alone to pasture on God's earth and do not do her any harm. Otherwise painful chastisement will overtake you. And remember when He made you successors after 'Ād and settled you in the land. You made mansions on its plains and hew out houses in the mountains : remember, therefore, Allāh's benefits and do not act corruptly in the land making mischiefs. The Chiefs of those who behaved proudly among his

people said to those who were considered weak, to those who believed from among them "Are you sure that Sālih is sent by his Lord?" They said: "Surely, we are believers in what he has been sent with. Those who were haughty said: 'Surely, we deny of what you believe in. So they slew the she-camel and revolted against their Lord's Commandments and they said: O' Sālih! Bring us of what you have threatened us with if you are one of the Apostles. Then the earthquake overtook them so they became motionless bodies in their abodes.'" (7 : 73-78)

CHAPTER 7

THE PROPHET LUT

(peace be upon him)

The Advent of Prophet Lut : The Prophet Lūt (peace be upon him) was contemporary of Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him). He was a nephew and follower of the faith of his uncle. He was the resident of Ur, an ancient town in Mesopotamia. God conferred prophethood upon him.

He was commanded to leave his native land and go to Sodom and Gomorrah to warn and reform the people who were indulged in grave sins such as homosexual intercourse and robbery. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“And Lūt (remember) when he said to his folk : Will you commit abomination such as no creature ever did before. Lo ! you come with lust unto men instead of women. Nay, but you are wanton folk.” (7 : 80, 81)

In another Verse the Holy Qur'ān throws a light on the character of those sinning people. It says :

“What ? Do you not come to males and commit robbery on the highways and do evil deeds in your meeting ?” (29 : 29)

The Prophet Lut Preaches and is Opposed : The Prophet Lūt (peace be upon him) was an alien to

those people. He began to preach the religion of God energetically. He advised the people to guard themselves against the punishment from God. He exhorted them to abandon sinful ways. He told them that God had created woman for them to satisfy their lust. They did not listen to the admonitions of their Prophet. They ridiculed and threatened him of dire consequences. They retorted that he would be expelled from that town in case he did not stop preaching and rebuking them. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

“And the answer of his people was only that they said (to one another) : Turn them out of your township. They are folk who seek to keep pure.” (7 : 82)

The same idea is expressed in the following Verses :

“They said : If you desist not, O' Lūt, you will soon be of the outcast. He said : I am, in fact, of those who hate your conduct. My Lord ! save me and my household from what they do.” (26 : 167-169)

Gradually time passed by and the Prophet Lūt (peace be upon him) did not achieve remarkable success in reforming those sinful persons. They were shamelessly addicted to grave sins and his warnings simply exasperated them.

Angels Appear as Guests : One day three angels in the disguise of handsome young boys came to Prophet Lūt (peace be upon him) and they conveyed

to him a special message from Almighty Allāh. The Prophet Lūṭ (peace be upon him) and his followers were directed to leave the town because something very dreadful was going to happen. When the people got wind of the visit of charming boys they tried to invade the house of Prophet Lūṭ (peace be upon him) and demanded of him to deliver the guests to them. The Prophet was much upset and he said :

“O’ my people ! Here are my daughters ! They are purer for you ! Beware of Allāh and degrade me not in (the presence of) my guests. Is there not among you any upright man ?” (11 : 78)

They rejected this appeal of the Prophet and said :

“Well, you know that we have no right to your daughters and well, you know what we want.” (11 : 79)

The Prophet was much disappointed and said :

“Would that I had strength to resist you or had some strong support.” (11 : 80)

The Angels Convey Message : The Prophet Lūṭ (peace be upon him) warned the people of the inevitable punishment in case they insisted on committing indecency. They laughed and doubted his character. When all efforts were ended in smoke, the angels who were in the form of human beings, said :

“O’ Lūṭ, Lo ! We are messengers of thy Lord ; they shall not reach thee. So travel with thy

people in a part of the night and not one of you turn round all save thy wife." (11 : 81)

The Prophet Lut is Delivered and his Nation Destroyed : The Prophet Lūṭ (peace be upon him) and his adherents left the city in the fagging part of the night and took shelter in a place of safety. Soon after an uproar took place. A sudden tremendous noise shook the earth. It was a scary and dreadful earthquake. The houses crumbled down and lofty buildings smashed to nothing but rubble. The rocks that went up in the air hit those who tried to escape. All arrogant sinners were completely destroyed. The Prophet Lūṭ (peace be upon him) and his followers were saved but his wife could not survive because she sympathised with the sinners. The Holy Qur'ān gives a brief description of this mishap in the following Verses :

"Then the (awful) cry overtook them at the sunrise : And We utterly confounded them, and We rained upon them stones of heated clay. Lo ! therein verily are portents for those who read the signs." (15 : 73-75)

The Prophet Lūṭ (peace be upon him) was admitted to God's mercy and was declared to be one of the righteous. He died in Palestine and was buried at Bani Na'ima near Hebron.

THE PROPHET IBRAHIM

(peace be upon him)

The Advent of Ibrahim : Long ago Almighty Allāh gave the honour of His choice to a man called Ibrāhim. He became the Prophet. His native Mesopotamia is the present southern 'Irāq. He was an ideal model for mankind. Speaking highly of him the Holy Qur'ān says :

"Ibrāhim was indeed a paragon of virtue, obedient to Allāh, ever inclined to Him and he was not of those who set up equals to Allāh. He was ever grateful for His favours, We chose him and guided him to a straight path ; and We bestowed on him good in this world and in the Hereafter, he will surely be among the righteous." (16 : 121-123)

His Nation was Staunch Worshippers of Idols : In the days of the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) ignorance prevailed upon the minds of the people. Most of the people had no knowledge of Allāh and His teachings. They worshipped the sun, the moon and the stars. They were astronomers and maintained the records of the movements of the planets. They prayed to the idols made of wood and stone and made many offerings for them. The priests enjoyed a prominent place in the society. They commanded

great respect among their followers. They were paid well. The poor people were ruled by the chiefs. They were subjected to their cruelty and injustice.

The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) was the son of Terah whose surname Ādhar was popularly known. He was a doll carver and a staunch worshipper of idols. He did all he could to compel Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) to worship the handicrafts of man but he flatly refused to do so. He hated even an idea of worshipping the idols which could neither see, nor hear nor speak.

The Prophet Ibrahim's Preachings : The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) received the message of Allāh through a special angel Gabriel (Jibrā'il). Gradually he was commanded to start preaching. As he was a strong man in his will and determination, he worked very hard. He began his mission in the teeth of opposition. He argued with his people with great vigour regarding the folly of worshipping the idols. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“When he said to his father and his people : What are these images to which you are so devoted ? They replied : We found our fathers worshipping them. He said : Then you as well as your fathers have, indeed, been in manifest error. They said : Is it really the truth that you have brought for us or are you jesting ? He replied : Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth ; He brought them into existence and I am of those who bear witness to

this, and by Allāh, I will certainly plan against your idols after you have gone away and turned your backs." (21 : 53-58)

Opposition by the People and Discussion with the King: The people paid no heed to his teachings. They insisted on their ways. They did not refrain from worshipping the twinkling stars, shining moon and ugly idols. The priests kept on encouraging the people to disbelieve in the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him). They were afraid lest they should be deprived of their priesthood if the people abandoned idol-worship. As a matter of fact the king Nemrūd in that area thought himself to be god. He had a big castle and many soldiers at his disposal. He desired to argue with the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) one day. They met to hold discussions. The King looked at the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) mockingly for a while. Then he said : What is this thing you are calling the people for ? Why do you persuade the people to worship God Who is invisible ? The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) replied boldly : My God is the One Who gives and takes away life. Nemrūd answered arrogantly : I have also the power to do that. I can kill the persons and can spare them also. The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) asked a clever question that caught every one by surprise. He said : My God causes the sun to rise from the East and set it in the West. Can you make it come from the East ? On hearing the king remained silent because he knew that no man had the power to do so.

Breakage of the Idols : After a few days a special event took place. There was a grand ceremony outside the locality and every one had to participate in the celebrations. Most of the evil-doers drank liquor and became noisy and wild. They were losing their balance of mind in a state of intoxication. There was a great hustle. Almost every one from the town attended the ceremony except the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him). He had a special plan in his mind. He proceeded towards the Temple escaping the sight of others. When he entered the Temple, he saw there many statues which stood motionless and helpless.

The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) lifted his heavy axe and began to smite the idols turn by turn. The idols fell to the ground with a big thud. The floor was loaded with numerous noses, ears, heads, arms, legs and other parts of the idols. He broke all the idols in the sanctuary but spared the Chief one. He did so to demonstrate that the idols had no power to cause harm to any one or bestow benefits upon others. They were as helpless as mere stones and it is against the dignity of human beings, to pay homage to them. When the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) finished his job, he left the Temple cautiously making sure that no one had seen him.

Decision to Burn Ibrahim Alive : When the celebrations came to an end, the people returned. The priests went directly towards the Temple as usual and some people accompanied them. They saw

that the idols were smashed to pieces. The floor was littered with stones and the Chief idol was standing with an axe hanging down along its neck. The priests began to scream and became confused. The people rushed to the Temple on hearing a deafening hue and cry. Every one was in a furious mood. They wanted to know who had dared do this trouble to the idols. They wished to take revenge. Then some one said that the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) would have done so because he consistently spoke ill of our gods and advised the people to worship One God. The Holy Qur'ān relates :

“Then he broke them into pieces except the Chief of them that haply they may return to him. They said : Who has done so to our gods ? Most surely he is one of the evil-doers. We heard a youth called Ibrāhim making mention of them.”
(21 : 57)

The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) was summoned to appear before the king. When he came, he was asked if he had destroyed all those idols. He remained silent for a while. Afterwards he directed the king to ask the chief idol on whose neck was hung the axe with which the havoc was done. The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) was mocking and making fun of those stupid people who worshipped helpless, dumb and deaf idols made of stones. The king as well as the priests did not like to prolong their discussions because the arguments of the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) were very sound and convincing. The Holy Qur'ān relates :

“Then they said to Ibrāhim : Is it you who has

done so to our gods? He replied : Well, some one has surely done this. Here is the chief of them, so ask them if they can speak. Then they turned towards one another and said : You yourselves are surely in the wrong. Then they were made to hang down their heads out of shame and said to Ibrāhim : Certainly you know that they do not speak.” (21 : 65-68)

Although they felt ashamed yet they remained stubborn. They decided to burn the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) alive for causing destruction to their idols.

Fire does not Burn the Prophet Ibrahim : A big furnace was prepared for this purpose. The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) was tied with a rope and he could hardly move. He was quite calm and cheerful believing firmly that Allāh would save him. He did not even resist and the spectators were amazed at his attitude.

The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) was thrown in the centre of the furnace. The flames of the fire were blazing. They sizzled and hissed but the Almighty Allāh ordered the fire not to harm His friend Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) :

“We said : O’ fire ! Be thou a means of comfort and security for Ibrāhim.” (21 : 70)

The transgressors thought that the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) had burnt to death. They did not hear the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) shouting with pain. Some time later the

people saw the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) walking out of the fire safe as if nothing had touched him. They were much surprised to see him.

Migration to Palestine: In spite of this miracle the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) could not have a large number of people following his teachings. He went on preaching and underwent a chain of tests and trials to prove his obedience and sincerity. When his people tortured the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him), he was ordered to leave that area and go to the blessed land which is now called Palestine. In compliance with the Commandment of Almighty Allāh the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) did not lose a moment's rest without getting in touch with the people and teaching them about God and His message. Nothing seemed to discourage him.

Birth of the Prophet Isma'il and Migration to Mecca: As the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) had no off-spring from his first wife Sārah, he entered into matrimonial alliance with another woman called Hājira (Hagar). He prayed for a son in all sublimity and his prayer was granted. Some time later Hājira announced happy news that she was expecting a baby. As time passed she gave birth to Ismā'il (Ishmael). Soon after God ordered the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) to take his wife Hājira and the Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) to the valley of Bathā (Mecca). In accordance with the Divine Commandment he set out on a long and troublesome journey. They arrived at the spot after a long time. It was hilly area without any trees and

water. They set up their tents and looked around but nothing was visible except sand. The Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) had attained the age of a few months only when the event of migration took place. He began to cry because of thirst. His mother began to look for water but it was not available anywhere.

Zam Zam is Discovered : She ran desperately in quest of water between two hillocks called Safa and Marwa but found no water. She came back to her thirsty infant and was surprised to see the spring of Zam Zam emerged from beneath the foot of the Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him). She heaved a sigh of relief. She quenched the thirst of her baby with water. Many people from far and wide came to the spot where Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) and his family had settled. Gradually this locality named Mecca became the birth place of Islam.

Vision of the Prophet Ibrahim Regarding the Sacrifice of the Prophet Isma'il: The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) went back to Palestine to join his first wife, the beloved Sārah. He received a Commandment in his vision to sacrifice his only son Ismā'il. The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) had no hesitation in complying with what he was ordered to do but his son was infant at that time. He had to wait until he grew older. Due to delay the temptation of not doing what he was supposed to do, was certainly there. But the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) had a solid faith in Allāh and his life was all dedicated to His service. So he kept on

waiting until Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) became a teenager. One day the father told his son about the dream. To his great surprise he saw that Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) had no objection and was willing to be sacrificed as Allāh had willed it. He said :

"O' my father ! Do what you have been commanded to do ; then you will find me of the patients." (37 : 10, 11)

This was a hard decision for a young man to take and it was a moment of great faith in Allāh.

The Ordeal of Sacrifice of Prophet Isma'il : On the tenth of Dhil H̥ijja the father and his beloved son walked side by side. A young lad possessed forbearance and the old man was full of determination and spirit to complete submission to Allāh. Their purpose was to carry out the orders of their Lord. Nothing was dearer to them than the service of Allah. They proceeded towards Mina with a sharp butcher's knife that the old shaky Ibrāhim had in his hand. Many a thought and memories of the past must have crossed in their minds. Finally they reached a special spot. The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) looked at his loving son whereas Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) cast a glance at his father obediently and cheerfully. The father laid his son prostrate on the ground. He was standing beside him. His heart was beating violently. He was shaking with emotions when he drew the knife across the neck of his son. It was a moment of action, an action that was very hard to put into practice.

God highly appreciated them for their obedience and they heard a voice :

“O’ Ibrāhim ! you have indeed shown the truth of the vision. Surely do We reward the doers of good.” (37 : 105)

When Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) fulfilled the command of the dream, he was ordered not to sacrifice his own son. A ram was provided in his stead. The Prophet Ismā’il (peace be upon him) stood up and the ram was sacrificed. So the moment of suspense came to an end and both the father and the son expressed a deep sense of happiness and gratitude. From that time until today, the savage custom of human sacrifice has been absolutely abolished.

Glad Tidings Regarding the Birth of Prophet Ishaq :
When the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) displayed his unstinted submission to the orders of Allāh by trying to sacrifice his beloved son Ismā’il he was informed of a glad-tiding regarding the birth of baby from Sārah, his first wife. The Holy Qur’ān affirms :

“And We gave him the good news of Ishāq (Isaac), a Prophet among the good ones and We showered our blessings on him and on Ishāq, and of their offspring are the doers of good and also those who are clearly unjust to their own selves.”
(37 : 112, 113)

Time passed by and Sārah, the old lady got pregnant. At last she gave birth to a male baby and they gave him the name of Ishāq. Later on Ismā’il

(peace be upon him) proved to be the Prophet of the Muslims and Ishāq (peace be upon him) became the Prophet of the Jews.

Re-construction of Ka'ba : The first House of Allāh, the Ka'ba was erected by the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). It was reconstructed by the Prophet Ibrāhim and the Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon them). The *Muqam-e-Ibrāhim* is still outside the enclosure. It is a place of marble-like stone on which he stood to raise the walls of the sanctuary at Mecca. This stone contains the sunken imprints of the feet of the great Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him). The Holy Qur'ān testifies to the hallowed sanctity of this stone by declaring it to be one of the Signs of Allāh. It says:

“We made the House a resort for men and a place of security after saying : Take as your place of worship the spot where Ibrāhim stood to pray. And We enjoined Ibrāhim and Ismā'il by saying : Purify My House for those who visit it and those who meditate therein; and those who bow down and those who prostrate themselves.” (2 : 125)

Burial Place : The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) lived for 175 years. His life was full of happenings, tests and trials. He had a firm faith in Allāh. He never missed a moment's rest in calling for the message of Allāh. He gained thousands upon thousands of believers. When he passed away, he was buried in Hebron, twenty miles south-west of Jerusalem.

THE PROPHET ISMĀ'IL (peace be upon him)

Advent of Prophet Isma'il and Desertion by his Father : The Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) was the eldest son of Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) by his second wife Hājira. As he had no off-spring from his first wife Sārah, he entered into matrimonial allegiance with Hājira, a devoted lady. He did so with the consent of his first wife. The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) prayed to his Lord to bless him with a son. The Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) was born to him in response to his prayers. The Holy Qur'ān makes mention of it in these words :

“Ibrāhim said : My Lord ! Grant me of the doers of good deeds. So We gave him the good news of a boy possessing forbearance.” (37 : 100, 101)

Shortly after his birth, in obedience to a Divine behest, he was left by his father Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) along with his mother at the place where stands Ka'ba. It was a barren and waterless place with no trace of life in any form. The great Patriarch, Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) left them to their fate with a heavy heart and prayed :

“O' Lord ! I have made some of my off-spring settle in this barren valley near the Sacred House so that they may keep up prayer.” (14 : 37)

The scene of departing Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) from his family was highly pathetic. It is narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said : The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) brought with him his wife Hājira and his son Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) whom she suckled. They placed the child close by the spot where Ka'ba now stands. In those days Mecca was uninhabited and without water. The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) placed beside them a bag full of dates and a skin full of water. When Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) returned, the mother of Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) ran after him and said : Ibrāhim ! Where are you going ? Why have you left me in the wilderness where none is to take pity on us. Nothing is available here to eat and drink. She repeated this several times but Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) did not hearken to her voice. Then she asked him. Have God Commanded you to do so ? He replied in affirmative. She said : Then God will cause no harm to me. Thereupon she returned back. When Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) got out of sight, he faced towards Ka'ba and prayed : O' Lord ! Grant that the hearts of some men may be affected with kindness towards them and bestow upon them all sorts of fruit so that they may be thankful. After this the mother of Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) began to suckle her child and to drink water out of the skin until it was emptied. Soon after her son felt thirsty. She could not bear to see him in such plight. Hājira ran

seven times from the hill of Safa to Marwa in quest of water. As she was about to commence the eighth trip, her attention was drawn to the crying child who in the agony of thirst was kicking the ground. Lo ! the water gushed forth miraculously from the earth in the form of fountain to save Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) from the tortures of thirst. Then she drank the water and suckled her child. May God bless the mother of Prophet Ismā'il ! Had she left the Zamzam as it was or had she not filled her skin with water, the Zamzam would always have remained an overflowing mountain. (Bukhāri)

Trial of Sincerity : The origin of the custom of true believers running between Safa and Marwa at the time of Hajj is deep connected with Hājira, the mother of Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him). Similarly the rite of sacrifice also owes its origin to the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) and his obedient son. He had received a Divine Command to sacrifice his beloved son. Both of them stood the test with credit. The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) decided to fulfil the vision on one hand whereas the Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) was ready with alacrity to lay down his life to win the favour and pleasure of Allāh. While they were proceeding towards Mina for the performance of the solemn duty, Satan tried to dissuade them from their firm resolve but to no effect. The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) passed the sharp knife over the throat of his son but an angel turned the knife upside down and a heavenly message forbade the act. The Prophet

Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) was desired to sacrifice in lieu of his son, a ram. So he slaughtered a well-fed ram presented by Allāh. When the Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) grew up, he married a girl of the tribe but soon divorced her at the request of his father to whom she proved to be discourteous. After this he married a daughter of the Jurhum Chief.

Re-construction of the House of Allah : Ka'ba is the veritable heart of Islam towards which all the prayers of the Muslims flow to vivify their souls. It was built by the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), the father of the human race. When it was damaged by flood, it was reconstructed on the same foundations by the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) with the help of his son Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him), the ancestors of the Arabs. The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) directed his son to bring a good stone to mark the corner of foundation. He brought one of which the angel Gabriel gave him information. It was the sacred Black stone-Hajar al-Aswad. When the Prophet Ibrāhim and Ismā'il (peace be upon them) raised the foundations of the House of Allāh they prayed :

“Our Lord ! Accept from us ; surely You are the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord ! Make us both submissive to You and raise from our off-spring a nation submitting to You and show us ways of devotion and turn to us mercifully. You are the Oft-Returning to mercy, the Most Merciful.” (2 : 127, 128)

“Our Lord ! And raise up in them an Apostle

from among them who shall recite to them Your communications and teach them the Book and the Wisdom and purify them. Surely You are the Mighty, the Wise." (2 : 129)

Mecca is Habitated: The Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) and his mother settled down in the vicinity of the Ka'ba. His progeny multiplied and ramified into numerous tribes. One of these is known as the Quraish from which the Ishmaelite Arabs sprang up. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) belonged to this family. They habitated the city of Mecca which became the centre of Islam.

THE PROPHET ISHĀQ (peace be upon him)

Miraculous Birth of Prophet Ishaq (Isaac) : The Prophet Ibrāhim had two sons—Prophet Ismā'il and Prophet Ishāq (peace be upon them). The Prophet Ishāq (peace be upon him) was his second son born of Sārah, his wife. When the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) passed through an ordeal of sacrificing his affectionate son, Prophet Ismā'il (peace be upon him) a glad-tidings of the birth of another son, Prophet Ishāq (peace be upon him) was conveyed to him. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“And We gave him the tiding of the birth of Ishāq, a prophet among the righteous.”
(37 : 112)

The Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) had attained the age of one hundred years and Sārah was ninety. They had practically lost all hope of having an issue at this advanced age. When the angel came to Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) with the happy news of the birth of a wise son, his wife laughed and did not believe it. She remarked that she had passed the age and now it was simply a folly to expect a child.

The Qur'ān tells us how this news was imparted to the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) and his wife :

“And his wife standing by, laughed when We gave her good tidings (of the birth) of Ishāq and after Ishāq, of Ya‘qūb (Jacob). She said : Oh, Woe is me ! Shall I bear a child when I am an old woman and this my husband is an old man ? Lo ! this is a strange thing. They said : Wonder thou at the Commandment of Allāh ? The mercy of Allāh and His blessings be upon you, O’ people of the House ! Lo ! He is Owner of Praise, Owner of Glory.” (11 : 71-73)

The Prophet Ishāq (peace be upon him) was born as God willed. He was the chosen servant of God and his descendants were men of high spiritual rank and character. He was inspired to do noble deeds and establish right worship. He was generous at heart.

Marriage and Death : The Prophet Ishāq (peace be upon him) was married to Rebecca when he was forty years old. His wife gave birth to Esau and Ya‘qūb. When the Prophet Ishāq (peace be upon him) grew old he lost his eye-sight. He passed away at Hebron at the age of 180 years. He was buried beside his father and mother.

THE PROPHET YA'QUB

(peace be upon him)

Allāh conveyed to the Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) glad tidings regarding the birth of elite Prophets, Ishāq and Ya'qūb (peace be upon them). The Holy Qur'ān says :

"We gave him Ishāq and Ya'qūb. Each of them We made a Prophet. And We gave them of Our mercy and assigned to them a high and true renown." (19 : 49, 50)

Qualities of the Prophet Ya'qub : The Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) was the son of Prophet Ishāq (peace be upon him) and his wife Rebecca. He was born at Palestine. He passed his life exactly in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. He had full faith in the Oneness of God. He directed his followers to do good and shun evil. He advised them to keep up prayer and give alms. He was a man of parts and wisdom. God showered His blessings on him and his kith and kin. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

"And We gave him tidings of the birth of Ishāq, a Prophet of the righteous and We showered Our blessings on him and on Ishāq and of their off-spring are some who do good and some who plainly wrong their own selves." (37 : 113)

At the age of sixty the Prophet Ishāq (peace be upon him) was blessed with a pair of twins namely Esau and Ya'qūb. Esau was a hunter and provided his aged parents with meat. Ishāq was chosen to be the Prophet of the Bani Israel.

His Marriage and Off-spring : It is narrated that his uncle Laban made Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) serve him for seven years on promise to marry Rachel with him. At the end of this period the marriage was solemnized. Later on he entered into matrimonial contract with three more women. The Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) had four wives and twelve sons who became the progenitors of twelve tribes. The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) and Benjamin were from Rachel. The Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) had great affection for them.

Plot against Prophet Yusuf : As the off-springs of his other wives were jealous of Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) they hatched out a plan to separate Yūsuf from his father. They took him out on a lame excuse of tending sheep and threw him into a waterless well. They came back home shedding crocodile tears and said: A wolf has devoured Yūsuf. The Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) suspected foul play on the part of his sons. He bore with patience the mental torture to which he was subjected in his old age. He wept bitterly day and night and lost his eye-sight. After a long time he came to know that Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) was alive. He was the custodian of store-

house in Egypt. The Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) along with the whole family proceeded towards Egypt on the invitation of his son. They were awarded a warm reception. He settled in Egypt. He died at the age of 140 years. He was buried in Hebron (al-Khalil) according to his will.

When the Prophet Yā'qūb (peace be upon him) was on the point of death, he called his sons and held conversation with them. It is mentioned in the following Verses of the Holy Qur'ān :

“The same did Ibrāhim enjoin upon his sons, and also Ya'qūb (saying): O' my sons! Lo! Allāh has chosen for you the true religion, therefore die not save as men who have surrendered (unto Him) or were you present when death came to Ya'qūb when he said to his sons: What will you worship after me? They said: We shall worship your God, God of your fathers Ibrāhim, Ismā'il and Ishāq, One God and unto Him we have surrendered.”
(2 : 132, 133)

THE PROPHET YUSUF

(peace be upon him)

The Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) had twelve sons and one of them was called Yūsuf (Joseph) whose life is full of many interesting happenings. He was a handsome and smart boy with polite habits and polished manners. He bore a sound character. He had an attractive personality. The Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) had a deep affection for his son, Yūsuf who occupied a rank of remarkable distinction among his brothers. His brothers began to feel jealous of him. They became united against Yūsuf and hatched a plan to do away with him.

Vision of Prophet Yusuf and its Interpretation :
When the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) became a teenager, he had a special vision. He rushed towards his father to inform him about it. He dreamt that there were eleven stars with the moon and the sun kneeling in front of him. The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) was much excited to see this fantastic dream. His heart was beating fast while he was breaking the news to his father. The Holy Qur'ān describes :

“Yūsuf said to his father : O' my father ! I have indeed seen in a dream eleven stars and the sun and moon making obeisance to me.” (12 : 4)

On hearing about this vision the Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) whisperingly advised his son not to divulge it to his brothers lest their jealousy should be excited. He had sound reasons to fear that they would plot against him. The Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) interpreted that Yūsuf was destined to become a great personality. God would give him wisdom, grace and honour. He would enable him to read into the future. To crown all he would become a Prophet. His eleven brothers (the stars) and his father and mother (the sun and moon) would stand in need of him and bow to his dignified position. The Holy Qur'ān relates :

“He (Ya'qūb) said : O' my dear son ! Tell not your brethren of your vision lest they should plot against you because surely Satan is the manifest enemy of man. So your Lord shall prefer you and will teach you the interpretations of dreams and will perfect His favours upon you and upon the family of Ya'qūb as He perfected it upon your forefather Ibrāhim and Ishāq. The Lord is Knowing, Wise.” (7 : 5, 6)

Plot against the Prophet Yusuf : The brothers of Prophet Yūsuf did not like that he should become the only centre of their paternal love. The sentiments of jealousy burnt them inside. They decided to get rid of him. One of them suggested that he should be put to death but the others did not agree with him because it was a terrible thing. Then another brother proposed to throw him into a pit. All of them unanimously voted in favour of this scheme. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“One said : Slay Yūsuf or drive him some other

land so that your father's favours may be exclusively for you and after that you shall live as upright persons. One among them said : Kill not Yūsuf but cast him down into the bottom of a pit if you must do it so that some wayfarers may pick him up." (12 : 7-10)

The Plan is put into Practice : In order to put their plan into practice the mischievous brothers of the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) approached their father. They persuaded the Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) to allow his affectionate son, Yūsuf to accompany them for tending the sheep. They insisted so much that their father became quite suspicious. He feared lest the jealous brothers should do some harm to Yūsuf. The Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) was hesitant in parting with his son but his other sons went on insisting and trying to satisfy him. They assured their father that they would look after their younger brother even at the risk of their own lives. As the Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) did not wish to compel Yūsuf to avoid his brothers he granted his permission hesitatingly. So the brothers got an opportunity of carrying out their evil design of casting him into the pit. The Holy Qur'ān says :

"They said : O' our father ! Why do you not entrust us with Yūsuf though we, indeed, mean him well. Send him with us tomorrow that he may enjoy himself and sport and surely we shall take good care of him. He said : It grieves me that you should take him with you and I fear lest

the wolf should devour him while you are heedless of him. They said : Surely if the wolf should devour him notwithstanding we are so strong a band, then we shall be in that case justly blamed for losing him." (12 : 11-15)

They proceeded towards the hills. All of them were nervous except the unsuspecting Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him). When they were enjoying a trip, they pushed the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) sharply towards the waterless well. He fell down with a thud and became sore all over. There was no food to eat and no water to drink. It was dark and scary. He screamed at the top of his voice but he could hear nothing except the echoes of his voice. He realized that a clever trick had been played upon him.

Father is Informed : The brothers of Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) were feeling guilty inside because they had committed a shameful act. They walked back slowly with dejected faces. They approached their father crying and sobbing. They were shedding crocodile tears while they were informing their father that the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) had been devoured by the wolf. They produced the blood smeared shirt of the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) as an evidence. The Holy Qur'ān says :

"And they came back weeping to their father at night fall and said : O' our father ! of a truth, we went racing with one another and left Yusuf

to look after clothes and the wolf devoured him; but we are afraid you will not believe us though we speak the truth. And they brought his shirt with false blood upon it." (12 : 16-18)

The Prophet Yusuf is Delivered out of Well and Sold : The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) was quite vigorous. He tried many times to climb out of the deep well but he could not. Finally he sat down in utter despair beseeching Allāh's help. After some time a caravan happened to pass by the well. Some men needed water to quench their thirst. One of them lowered his bucket into the well but he could not hear the splash of water. The well was dry and there was nothing except the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) who was waiting anxiously for some one to come and rescue him. When the bucket came down, it touched the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him). He clung to it with his dear life. The man pulled hard at the bucket and the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) came out of the well. He felt a great pleasure and expressed a deep sense of gratitude to Allāh Who had bestowed favour upon him. He dusted himself off and told the man all about what had happened to him. The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) was taken to Egypt where he was sold as a slave. The Holy Qur'ān states :

"And there came a wayfarer and they sent down a water drawer. He let down his pail into the pit. He said : What a good luck, here is a youth. And they kept his case secret to make merchandise of him and Allāh knew what they did,

and they sold him for a petty price, a few dirhams and they attached little value to him." (12 : 20, 21)

The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) was purchased by a famous rich man. He rendered services to him and his family.

The Prophet Yusuf Overpowers Temptation : The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) was a handsome and an attractive young man. He was extremely charming and irresistible. He was a perfect gentleman whom Allāh had honoured with His love, grace and protection. He was held in high esteem in the house of his master. As the time passed the lady of the house put him in an awkward position. She fell in love with him. She could hardly shake him out of her mind. One day in the absence of her husband she approached him and desired to be very close to him. The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) refrained from even casting a glance at her. He tried to get rid of her but she chased him. She grabbed hard at the back of his shirt and it was torn apart. Just at that time the master appeared on the scene. He saw what was going on. He flew into a rage. The master's wife was embarrassed beyond all limits. She cried out after absolute frustration in her evil designs and levelled false accusations against Yūsuf, the innocent. The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) clarified his position with the moral support of one of the maid-servants who bore witness by saying : Look at the shirt. If it is torn at the back, the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) will be quite innocent. He should not be blamed. In case it is rent from the front the accused will be one of the

liars. When the shirt was examined it was torn at the back and the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) was found truthful. The master was fully convinced of the innocence of Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him). He appealed to him to keep the matter in secret lest it should become a scandal. Moreover he admonished his wife to beg pardon of Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him).

Banquet is Arranged : Many people got wind of this incident. They started to talk about the master's wife who had been deeply affected with the love of her slave. She wished to seduce him. The whole town kept on talking maliciously about her.

When the master's wife heard about it, she made a special plan. She wished to show the people that it was very hard to resist the charm of Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) and his lovely youth. She arranged a grand banquet and invited most of the women in the town. They were talking and enjoying themselves. The most delicious food and fruit were served before the guests. The master's wife gave a sharp knife to every lady to peel off the fruit. When the ladies were busy with using the knives, the master's wife asked the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) to enter the room. As the door opened with a squeak, there prevailed a pen-drop silence for a few second and the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) stood calmly. The ladies looked at him constantly and got stunned at his beauty. He was so attractive that many of them were taken by a great surprise. They forgot that they were using the knives.

They cut their fingers in utter amazement. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“When they saw him, they exalted him and (in their amazement) cut their hands exclaiming : Remote is Allāh from imperfection. This is not a mortal but is a noble angel. She said : It is he about whom you blamed me. Certainly I wished him to yield to my desires but he stood firm.” (12 : 31, 32)

The Prophet Yūsuf in the Prison : The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) found himself in a great trouble. As the time passed by, the problems became more complicated. The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) prayed to Almighty Allāh to grant him protection from those ladies. He wished to be in prison rather than being indecent. He desired to escape from the temptations of sexual instinct. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“He said : My Lord ! I prefer the prison to compliance with their bidding : and if you turn not away their snares from me, I may perchance yearn towards them (out of youthful folly) and become one of the unwise.” (7 : 33)

Allāh accepted his prayer to shield him from evil temptations. The elites of the town noticed that their females were becoming ardent lovers of the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him). Although they knew that he had committed no crime yet they decided to imprison the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) to avoid disturbance in their society. He remained in the prison for several years and developed

friendly relations with many prisoners. There he preached the religion of Allāh and tried to reform the prisoners who were greatly impressed by his personality. One day two prisoners saw strange dreams. They came to the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) for asking the interpretations of those dreams. One of them said : I saw in a dream that I was pressing wine. The other prisoner said : I saw in my dream that I was carrying a basket of bread on my head and the birds were eating from it. The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) asked them to wait until lunch time so that they might become anxious and listen to him attentively. At the appointed time the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) said : The one who was pressing wine, will be set at liberty and he will serve wine to his master. The other will be crucified for the crime, he had committed. The Holy Qurān affirms :

“O’ my two fellow prisoners ! As for one of you he shall pour out wine for his lord to drink and as for the other, he shall be executed and the birds shall eat from off his head. The matter is decreed concerning which you inquired.”
(12 : 40)

Soon after the interpretations of those dreams turned out to be true. When the first man was about to leave the prison, the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) asked to remember him to the master. He did so as a self-respecting man without adopting a supplicative attitude. The man who found deliverance forgot mentioning all about the Prophet Yūsuf

(peace be upon him) to his lord. So he had to linger in the prison for a few more years. He continued praying and teaching goodness in the prison. One day, the king of Egypt dreamt that seven fat cows were eaten by seven thin cows and he also saw seven green ears of corn and seven others that withered. The king wished to know the interpretation of that strange dream. Every one was puzzled because no one could really say what it meant. Some of them thought that it was a passing dream. The ex-prisoner informed the king about the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) who was well versed in the art of explaining the dreams accurately. The king became quite curious and sent the man to see the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) in the prison. The man rushed towards him and tendered an apology for not speaking to the master about him. Then he asked him about the fantastic dream of the king. The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) said : You will sow for seven years diligently. There will be seven years of rich harvest in the country. It is better to store as much of the food stuff as possible because there will be a famine lasting for seven years. During this period of hardships the preserved stores of grain shall be consumed except a little quantity. Afterwards there will be a year in which the people shall have heavy rains and bumper crops. They shall press grapes.

The Prophet Yusuf's Innocence is Established : The man sought permission of leave from the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) and proceeded towards the king. He told him the interpretation of his

dream in the presence of many courtiers. They were much surprised. The king was greatly impressed and expressed a keen desire to see him in person. He issued an immediate order to release the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) from the prison but he refused to leave it until he had his innocence established beyond all doubts. He told the king about the cruelty and injustice inflicted upon him without any fault. He wished to clear the blot of crime on his fair name. The king summoned the women who put the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) to inconvenience. They all confessed that he was quite innocent. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

“They (women) said : Allāh Blameless ! We knew of no evil on his part. Thereupon the Chief's wife said : Now the truth has become established. I asked of him an evil act and he is surely of the truthful.” (7 : 50)

The Prophet Yusuf as Director of Stores : The king was much impressed with his nobility and intelligence. He therefore, offered him an important position in the Government. He was appointed as the Director of Stores. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“He (the king) said : Surely from this day you shall be with us invested with rank and trust. Then he (Yūsuf) said : Set me over the store houses of the land. Surely I am a skilled custodian (knowing well my duties). (7 : 54, 55)

The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) worked efficiently and managed the affairs. He won a good name as an officer and became powerful in the land.

The Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) was awfully unhappy. He missed the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) very much. He was assured by Almighty Allāh that he would see his son again. The brothers of the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) grew in age and kept remembering the mischievous trick which they had played upon him. It was highly shameful act. Now Palestine was also in the grip of dreadful famine. There was an acute dearth of food. The family of the Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) was passing through the most straitened circumstances. They heard that Egyptians had huge stock of food stuff. They sold it at reasonable rates. The sons of the Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) prepared a caravan and went to Egypt to purchase grain.

The Prophet Yusuf's Brothers go to Egypt and buy Food Conditionally : When they reached Egypt the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) recognized his brothers immediately and his heart was beating violently. He did not remind them of the cruelty inflicted upon him. He did not disclose his identity. He showed kindness to them and furnished them with provision at a very fair price. They felt highly obliged because of his noble behaviour. Before their departure the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) said : If you come back, bring with you a younger brother of yours from your father's side. If my request is not complied with, I shall sell you no more grain.

They came back home after a tiresome journey

They told their father that the custodian of the food stores in Egypt had expressed a keen desire to see their younger brother. On hearing this the Prophet Ya'qūb's face became tense and worried. He did not like the same thing happen to his other son. He hesitated to allow Yūsuf's brother to accompany them. Because of his previous bitter experience he could not trust them. They in the long run, convinced him after giving him a firm covenant in Allāh's name that they would bring back the brother of Yūsuf. When they opened the sacks of grain and were much surprised to find their money in it.

After many weeks their second caravan reached Egypt and went directly to the main store-house. The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) greeted them with open arms. Every one was much pleased. There was a lot of hustle and bustle. The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) took his younger brother aside and told him that he was Yūsuf who was thrown into the well. His brother was much surprised and his joy knew no bounds. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“And when they came into Yūsuf's presence, he took his own brother aside with him saying: Lo ! I am your brother. Therefore grieve not at what they do.” (7 : 69)

Younger Brother is Detained : The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) had certain plans in his mind. He furnished them with their provisions and asked one of his servants to put a drinking cup in their bag. As the caravan was about to depart, some one shouted ! The king's silver drinking cup is missing. Every one got puzzled. The brother of the

Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) said : We are not thieves and we have not come here to make mischiefs. One of the Egyptians said : He who is found guilty, shall be detained here as penalty. All of them agreed upon the awarding of this punishment. They began to search out the sacks of the customers. They found the missing drinking cup—in the sack of the younger brother of the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him). It followed a great deal of excitement. The brothers tried very hard to convince the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) not to detain their brother but he flatly refused. He asked them not to back out of their promise. They became upset. Their eldest brother decided not to go back to the Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him) again and face him with heart breaking news. He stayed there and sent back his other brothers to inform the care-worn father of the whole situation. They went back and conveyed the most shocking news to their father. He displayed unshakable patience and said :

“So patience is most fitting for me. May Allāh restore them all to me. Surely, He is the Knowing, the Wise.” (12 : 83)

Any how he directed his sons to go and seek tidings of the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) and his younger brother for whom he used to yearn day and night. They went to Egypt again after a few weeks. This time they had scanty money. They requested the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) to help them in charity. They were dressed in rags. They looked pathetic due to poverty. The Holy Qur'ān states :

“And when they came back into the presence of

Yūsuf, they said : O' Chief ! Misfortune has afflicted us and our family and we have brought a small amount, so give us full measure and be charitable to us ; Surely, Allāh will requite charitable." (12 : 88)

The Prophet Yusuf Helps his Brothers and Discloses his Identity : The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) was well known for his generosity. He had a tender and sympathetic heart. He took pity on them. He helped them from the core of his heart. They had also sinking feelings inside. Soon after he disclosed his identity to his brothers. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

"He (Yūsuf) said : I am Yūsuf and this is my brother. Allāh has shown us favour. Surely who fears Allāh and endures, is rewarded for surely Allāh does not waste the reward of those who do good." (12 : 90)

Now every one wished to go immediately to their father to inform him of the happy news that the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) was alive. At the time of departure the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) gave them his shirt and said :

"Cast it on my father's face and he will recover his sight and come to me with all your family." (12 : 93)

The brothers came home with happy spirit. They put the shirt of the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) on the face of the Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him). He regained his eye sight in the twinkling of an eye. He took a sigh of relief when

he smelt the sweet perfume of the Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) from his shirt. The brothers of Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) begged pardon of their father and he forgave them with an open heart.

The Prophet Ya'qub Meets the Prophet Yusuf : They decided to settle in Egypt. They took their bag and baggage and set out on a long journey. They were given a warm reception when they reached Egypt. The father, Yā'qūb, met his son Yūsuf after a long separation. He said :

“O' my father ! This is the interpretation of my old vision. My Lord has indeed made it to be true and He has shown me kindness. When He brought me forth from prison and brought you all from the desert even after Satan has sown (seeds of) dissensions between me and my brothers. Surely my Lord is tender to whom He wills. Surely He is the Knowing, the Wise. O' my Lord ! You have indeed given me (something) of the sovereignty and taught me of the interpretation of dreams—Creator of the heavens and the earth ! You are my Protecting friend in this world and the Hereafter. Make me die submissive (unto You) and join me with the righteous”. (12 : 100, 101)

THE PROPHET SHU'AIB (peace be upon him)

The People of Midian and Their Character : Long ago a nation colonized in the northern Arabia. This nation had an ancestral link with Midian, the son of Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him). The name of the habitation where he resided was also Midian. It was a fertile land which produced rich crops. Most of the people had adopted trade as their profession and earned a lot of money by fair or foul means. They hankered after wealth from dawn to dusk. They used to give short measures and weight to their customers. They were dishonest and deceitful in their dealings. In addition to malpractices in commerce and trade the people indulged in theft, debauchery, fornication and numerous unlawful acts. The abundance of wealth had made those people refractory and wayward. They were not afraid of God even and did whatever they liked. They ignored all moral values. Allāh sent Shu'aib for the reformation of His people. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“And unto Midian We sent their brother Shu'aib who said : O' my people ! serve Allāh, you have no god save Him. There has come to you a manifest sign from your Lord : then give good weight and measure, and be not niggardly of your gifts to men and do not do evils in the earth

after it has been righted. That is better for you if you are believers.” (7 : 83-86)

The Prophet Shu'aib Preaches and is Tortured :

According to the research of Ibn Khaldūn the mother of Prophet Shu'aib (peace be upon him) was the pious daughter of the Prophet Lūṭ (peace be upon him). His genealogy joins with Midian son of Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him). The Prophet Shu'aib (peace be upon him) was an eloquent orator. He had the surname of *Khatibul Anbiya* (the Preacher to the Prophets).

He advised the people to mend their ways and give up wrangling in evil ways. The people turned a deaf ear to his advice and ridiculed him whenever they had got an opportunity. They began to torture him. The mischief makers used to sit in the way towards the residence of the Prophet Shu'aib (peace be upon him) and threatened his visitors of dire consequences. They disgraced those who followed him. He continued preaching and warned the evil doers by saying :

“And sit not down in every path, threatening and turning from the path of God those who believe in Him and craving to make it crooked. Remember when you were few and He multiplied you ; and see what was the end of the evil doers.”

Some haughty chiefs of the Midian tribe threatened the Prophet Shu'aib (peace be upon him) and his followers to be banished from that locality. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

“Said the crowd of those who were big with

pride amongst his people : We will surely turn you out, O' Shu'aib and those who believe with thee from our village, or else you should return to our faith." (7 : 88)

The Prophet Shu'aib (peace be upon him) was not coerced by such threats and went on conveying the message of Allāh. He reminded them of dreadful calamities which befell upon the previous nations. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

"And, O' my people ! let not the schism with me cause you to sin so that there befall you that which befell the folk of Nūḥ and the folk of Hūd and the folk of Sālih and the folk of Lūṭ are not far off from you." (11 : 89)

Visitation Befalls upon them : The people jocularly rejected the veracity and truth of the religion of Allāh. They tortured Prophet Shu'aib (peace be upon him) and his followers by transgressing all moral limits. When they did not give up their obstinacy in doing evil actions, Allāh destroyed them by descending dreadful chastisement upon them. The Holy Qur'ān says :

"And when Our Commandment came to pass, We saved Shu'aib and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us, and the awful cry seized those who did injustice and morning found them prostrate in their dwellings. As though they had not dwelt there. A far removal for Midian, even as Thamūd had been removed afar !" (11 : 94, 95)

“But they denied him, so there came on them the retribution of the day of gloom. Lo ! it was the retribution of an awful day.” (26 : 189)

Death and Burial : After the perdition of that sinful nation, Prophet Shu'aib (peace be upon him) settled in Ḥaḍramaut where he passed away after some time. He was buried in Shabān near the Valley of Ibn 'Ali. The people came from far and wide to visit his sacred grave.

THE PROPHET DĀWUD

(peace be upon him)

Dāwūd (David) was not only an illustrious Prophet of the Israelites but he was also their king. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

“And Allāh gave him the kingdom and wisdom and taught him of that which He willed.”
(2 : 251)

“(And it was said unto him) O’ Dāwūd ! Lo ! We have set you as a vicegerent in the earth, therefore, judge aright between mankind and follow not desire.” (38 : 26)

The Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) had an ancestral link with the Prophet Ya‘qūb (peace be upon him). He lived in *Bait-ul-Lahm* which was situated at the distance of ten miles from Jerusalem. The Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) was the youngest of his eight brothers. The Prophet Samuel (peace be upon him) had received an indication that the Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) would become king after Jālūt (Goliath). He went to *Bait-ul-Lahm* to cast a glance at Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him). He was much impressed at his attractive and angelic sight.

The Prophet Dawud Adopts the Companionship of Talut : According to the *Torah* Talūt (Saul) was in

quest of a man who could play on a harp. As the Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) was well versed in this art, he was asked to come to Talūt and stay with him. The Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) passed most of the time in the companionship of his master and visited his father off and on. He helped him in tending the sheep. Thus he got an opportunity to hunt wild beasts. The Holy Qur'ān makes mention of Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) at many places.

Heroic Deeds of Prophet Dawud: The Bible relates an incident which throws a light on the heroic deeds of Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him). Once a war broke out between the Israelites and the Philistines. The army of the Philistines was commanded by Jālūt who was a man of lofty stature. He put on a shining armour. The Israelites were overawed to see Jālūt's army which was well accoutred. He called out his opponents to combat but none of the Israelites had the courage to accept the challenge. He declared : In case any one of the Israelites overpowered me, I would surrender to him but if I gained the upper hand, the opponents would have to become under the sway of the servitude of the Philistines. The Israelites were terror-stricken. They had lost their courage and self respect. The Prophet could not bear this disgrace. So he decided to face Jālūt for the sake of truth, honour and dignity. The king Tālūt advised him to refrain from fighting with an experienced warrior. The Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) did not budge an inch from his decision. He took his cudgel and proceeded towards the battle-field to fight with Jālūt.

When they faced each other, Jālūt disdained his adversary and cursed him by taking the name of some deities. He threatened Talūt that his flesh would be thrown before the wild beasts and birds. The Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) did not care for such warnings and marched forward. He prayed :

“Our Lord ! Pour out constancy on us and make our steps firm and help us against those who are disbelievers.” (2 : 249)

By God's will Jālūt was killed by Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) and his army was put to rout. The Philistines took to their heels. The Israelites chased them and came by an enormous booty. The Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) won a good deal of appreciation and popularity because he rescued his people from those grave dangers which prevailed over them.

The Prophet Dawud is Raised to Eminence : Tālūt (Saul) enriched Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) with valuable rewards and gave his daughter in marriage to him. He appointed him as the Supreme Commander of his army because of his valour. When he saw that Prophet Dāwūd's influence was increasing rapidly, he began to feel jealous of him. He nursed enmity against his son-in-law. The son of Tālūt was very kind to Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him). He informed him of the real position. The Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) tried his best to clear the mind of his father-in-law but in vain. Accidentally Talūt was killed by his enemies and his son committed suicide. The Israelites unanimously acknowledged

the Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) as their king. He managed the administration of the country efficiently. He conquered vast areas of land. The people prospered during his reign. They became morally strong, just, fair-minded and God-fearing. They worshipped one God. Their minds were illuminated with the light of true guidance.

Revelation of Zabur : Allāh revealed the *Zabūr* (Book of Psalms) to Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him). It contains lessons for the guidance of Israelites. The Holy Qur'ān says :

We gave to Dāwūd *Zabūr*. (4 : 163)

Whenever he recited the verses of the *Zabūr* in a sweet melodious tone, the listeners began to dance in a fit of religious frenzy. They flocked around him and eulogized God in the accompaniment of Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him). Above all the beasts, birds, creeping insects and even mountains were fascinated on hearing the recitation of the hymns from the *Zabūr*. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

“We bestowed grace aforetime on Dāwūd from Ourselves. O’ ye mountains ! Sing you back the praises of Allāh with him and you birds also.”
(34 : 10)

It was We that made the hills declare in union with him Our praises at even tide and the break of day and the birds all with him turned to Allāh.” (38 : 18, 19)

The Prophet Dawud as an Adept Craftsman : Iron is hard stuff but in the hands of Prophet Dawud

(peace be upon him) it became soft and pliable to be turned into any shape. As an adept craftsman he made coats of mail. Thus the manufacture of this defensive armour is traditionally attributed to the Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him). The Holy Qur'ān says :

“It was We who taught him the making of coats of mail for your benefit, to guard you from each other's violence. Will you then be grateful.”
(21 : 80)

“And We made the iron soft for him (commanding) make thou coats of mail balancing well the rings of chain armour and work ye righteousness.” (34 : 10)

The Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) was endowed with the knowledge of understanding the tones of the bird. He could talk and listen to the birds just like human beings.

Death and Burial : The Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) passed away at the age of 70 years. He was buried in Jerusalem.

THE PROPHET SULAIMĀN

(peace be upon him)

The Prophet Sulaimān (Solomon) was the youngest son of the Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him). He was born at Jerusalem. The name of his mother was Saba. As he was a talented fellow with versatile gifts, his father made him his heir. After the death of Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) he ascended the throne of Judia on account of his sagacity, power of judgement, right understanding and spiritual insight. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“And We verily gave knowledge to Dāwūd and Sulaimān and they said : Praise be to Allāh Who has preferred us above many of his believing sons”. (27 : 15)

The Prophet Sulaiman Makes Sound Decisions :

The Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) was endowed with the quality of giving sound decision in complicated cases. Once a dispute arose between two persons. They were present before the Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him). One of them said : Sir, the sheep of that person have trampled over my crops. They have grazed and caused me a considerable loss. It must be compensated by the owner. The shepherd was very poor. He had nothing except sheep and the damage done to the crops exceeded the

price of the sheep. The Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) ordered the defaulter to give his sheep to the owner of the land as reparation. Sulaimān, the teen-aged child was listening to the judgement of his father. He, respectfully, spoke out: Dear father, undoubtedly, your decision is correct but it will be more appropriate if all the sheep are handed over to the plaintiff for the utilization of their milk and wool only. The respondent should be directed to render services to the owner of the field until the condition of the damaged fields restores to the normal position. When it is done, sheep must be given back to the shepherd. The Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) appreciated this novel way of awarding justice and the Holy Qur'ān speaks very highly of him :

“And Dāwūd (David) and Sulaimān (Solomon) when they gave judgement concerning the field, when people's sheep had strayed and browsed therein by night ; and We were witnesses to their judgement. And We made Sulaimān to understand (the case) ; and unto each of them We gave judgement and knowledge.” (21 : 78, 79)

Prevalence over Wind : The Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) inherited many virtues from his illustrious father. He was endowed with special gifts. Wind was made subservient to him and he could easily perform long journey in the twinkling of an eye. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

“And (We made) the wind subservient to Sulaimān whereof the morning course was a

month's journey and the course a month's journey." (34 : 12)

"So We subjected the wind to his power, setting fair by his command withersoever he intended." (38 : 36)

"And unto Sulaimān We subdued the wind in its raging. It flows by his order towards the land which We had blessed. And of every thing We are aware." (21 : 81)

The Prophet Dawud Perceives the Speech of the Birds : The Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) was gifted with the knowledge of understanding the speech of birds, animals and insects. He was also capable to talk to them. The Holy Qur'ān testifies to it in the following Verses :

"He (Sulaimān) said : O' People ! We have been taught the language of the birds and have been given (abundance) of all things ; this is indeed grace manifest (from Allāh)." (27 : 10)

Jinns are Subdued to Him : He was also given the power over Jinns and Devils. He utilized them in his service. They carried out his orders ungrudgingly and were punished when they became refractory. The Holy Qur'ān affirms :

"We gave (Sulaimān) certain of the Jinns who worked before him by the permission of his Lord. And such of them as deviated from Our command, We caused to taste the punishment of flaming fire to them. They made for him what he willed ; synagogues, images, basin-like reservoirs

and cooking cauldrons fixed into the ground. Give thanks, O' House of David! Few of my bondmen are thankful." (24 : 12, 13)

In another Verse the Holy Qur'ān says :

"And before Sulaimān were marshalled his hosts—of Jinns, and men and birds and they were all in order and ranks." (27 : 17)

It is stated that the Jinns were subjugated to the Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) to help him in the construction of the Holy Temple—*Baitul Maqadas (Masjid Aqsā)*.

Ardent Lover of Horses : The Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) was also a great lover of horses. They constituted an essential part of his army. When they returned after a mission, he would give them strokes of affections on ankles and necks. The Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) did so in approbation of their loyalty and high speed.

The Incident of the Queen of Saba : The area which now comprises Yaman and is known as Saba was ruled by a queen. It was a prosperous kingdom. The queen enabled its people to attain a high degree of civilization. One day Hud Hud informed the Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) of the flourishing kingdom of Sabā. It said : "The ruler of Sabā is the queen upon whom God has bestowed His unlimited favours. Her throne is magnificent. She is depraved. The inhabitants of her kingdom worship the sun and the moon. They do not make obeisance to Allāh and refrain from thanking Him

Who has created all these objects.” Sulaimān, the Prophet of Allāh and the King wrote a letter and handed over to Hud Hud to be conveyed to the queen of Sabā. He warned her not to be arrogant of her power. He advised her to submit to God and abide by His Commandments. The queen read this letter and was much puzzled. As she was a prudent lady, she called her chiefs and sought their counsels. Some proud chiefs suggested to fight tooth and nail against the Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) whereas the others left the matter for her to decide. The Holy Qur’ān says :

“She said : O’ chiefs ! Advise me in this affair for I never decide an affair until you are in my presence. They said : We are endowed with strength and are possessors of mighty powers, but the command is thine. Therefore see what you will command.” (27 : 29-33)

The queen did not like to embroil her country into war because it would cause destruction. She thought of a plan and arranged for precious gifts for the monarch. She planned to germinate cordial relations and pacify her warlike subjects by using this device. But wealth had no value for the Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him). He was annoyed at the delivery of the presents. He returned them with harsh words and said to the messenger :

“I do not hanker after wealth. I, therefore, attach no importance to these costly gifts. I wish that the queen and his followers should submit to God and follow the true faith. I shall invade

your country if the queen does not come to me in submission."

After some time the King marched with an army and passed through the Valley of Ants on his way to the kingdom of Sabā. In the Valley he overheard the conversation among the terrified ants who hurried towards their holes for fear of being crushed under the feet of the marching army. The King was moved to pity and learnt the lesson to protect the life and honour of the humble creatures. He thought that the queen and his people are just like humble ants. They should not be trampled upon and killed to win fame in the world. An account of this incident is related in the following Verses :

"At length when they came to a valley of ants, one of the ants said : O' ants ! Get into your holes lest Sulaimān and his hosts crush you without knowing it. Thereupon he smiled at her speech and he said : O' my Lord ! So order me that I may be grateful for Your favours which You have bestowed upon me and my father and that I may work the righteousness that will please Thee and admit me by Your grace into the ranks of Your righteous servants." (27 : 18, 19)

The King did not proceed further because he did not like the massacre which would result in case of clash between two armies. His aim was to reform the queen and the inhabitants of Sabā. He desired to bring them to the right path. He wished to save the depraved people from seduction.

When the queen got wind of an expected attack

of the Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) she proceeded towards him to patch up differences. When the King came to know of her departure, he ordered one of the Jinns to bring the magnificent throne of the queen in the twinkling of an eye. The command was obeyed immediately. When the queen arrived at the court of Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) after a long journey, she was asked to identify her throne. She recognised the throne and said :

“I am already aware of your power and majesty. I have come to you as your submissive servant.”

The Holy Qur’ān states :

“So when she arrived she was asked : Is it your throne ? She said : It was just like this and we were given the knowledge before it and we were already submissive and he diverted her from the worship of others besides Allāh, for she was sprung of a people that have no faith.”
(7 : 42, 43)

The queen was taken to the lofty palace. Its floor was made of slabs of polished glass that deceived the eyes and looked like water. The queen tucked up her shirt to pass through it. She was reminded that that was not water. She then realized that reality did not lay at the surface and it needed eyes to see. According to the Holy Qur’ān she said :

“O’ my Lord ! I have indeed wronged myself ; I do submit with Sulaimān to the Lord of the Worlds.” (27 : 45)

The queen of Sabā felt penitence and accepted the religion of God. The Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) ruled for thirty years. He died at the age of eighty-nine years. After his death Rohoboam, his son became a king. He led a luxurious life and yielded to pleasure seeking temptations. The people revolted against him and soon the glorious chapter of the reign of Prophet Dāwūd's family came to an end.

THE PROPHET ILYAS

(peabe be upon him)

After the death of Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) his kingdom was dismembered. There was virtually the rule of Satan all around. The religious people were mocked at. The ruler of Somaria killed a large number of learned people. When the evil reached the saturation point, God sent the Prophet Ilyās (peace be upon him) to reform mankind during the reign of the king Ahab of Israel. He tried his best to save the people from polytheism. He forbade them to worship the Tyrian Bāl. He advised the people to ward off evil and worship One God. When his efforts bore no fruit, he, suddenly appeared before the king and foretold him that severe draught and famine would overtake his kingdom. He added that the Tyrian Bāl would be powerless to avert it. The people paid no heed to his warnings and did not mend their ways. The prophecy of the Prophet Ilyās (peace be upon him) turned out to be true and whole of the kingdom came under the sway of famine. The people began to starve. After three years the Prophet Ilyās (peace be upon him) supplicated to show mercy to the famine-stricken people. They acknowledged the authority of God and felt penitence. Soon after the rain ended the draught and God lifted his curses. After this he was

directed by God to call upon al-Yasā to be his successor. The Prophet Ilyās (peace be upon him) did so in obedience to His command and disappeared mysteriously. The Holy Qur'ān makes mention of Prophet Ilyās (peace be upon him) in the following Verses :

“And commemorate Ismā'il, Ilyās and Dhul Kifl. Each of them was the companion of the good.” (38 : 48)

THE PROPHET AL-YASA (ELISHA)

(peace be upon him)

Al-Yasa has been mentioned twice in the Holy Qur'ān :

And commemorate Ismā'il, Elisha and Dhul-kifl ;
each of them was of the company of the good.

(38 : 48)

And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Ilyas all
in the ranks of the righteous ; and Ismā'il and
Elisha (Al-Yasa) and Jonas and Lot ; each have
We preferred above the nations. (To them) and
their fathers and progeny and brethren, We
chose them and We guided them to a straight
way.

(6 : 85-87)

The commentators give no account of him except
that he was the son of Ukhtub. The Bible says that
his father was Shaphat.

Al-Yasa was the cousin and spiritual successor
of the Prophet Ilyās (peace be upon him).

One day Ilyas (peace be upon him) passed
through the fields while the owner (Al-Yasa) was
busy in ploughing. No sooner had the owner seen
the Prophet than he abdicated his own work and

approached Ilyas (peace be upon him) in hot haste. Al-Yasa began to follow him. The Prophet was much surprised and remarked: Why do you accompany me after leaving your own work? Al-Yasa retraced his steps and fetched his ox. He slaughtered it, lit the fire and cooked the beef. He fed Ilyas, his companions and many other guests to seek the pleasure of Allāh. The Prophet was much pleased with the host for his sincerity, hospitality and righteousness. When Ilyas (peace be upon him) was about to depart, Al-Yasa expressed his keen desire to live in the company of his honourable guest during the rest of his life and serve him wholeheartedly as a humble servant. As the noble attitude of Al-Yasa had enamoured Ilyas (peace be upon him), the latter accorded him permission without hesitation. When the Prophet Ilyas (peace be upon him) was on his death-bed, he wished to bid him farewell. Al-Yasa was not prepared to leave him. Then Ilyas (peace be upon him) asked him to express any of his desires to be fulfilled. Al-Yasa said: I wish that Allāh may bestow blessings upon me in the same way as He has blessed you. The Prophet Ilyas (peace be upon him) supplicated and invoked blessings of Allāh upon his successor. His prayer was granted. Allāh chose Al-Yasa as His Prophet after the death of Ilyas (peace be upon him). He derived spiritual magnificence from the company of his guide and became the favourite of Allāh.

After some time he proceeded to Yariha to preach the religion of Allāh. The inhabitants of that locality gave him a warm reception. At that time they

were under the spell of starvation. The land was barren and water was not available. Al-Yasa (peace be upon him) supplicated to Allāh to show mercy to the famine-stricken people. His prayer was granted and Allāh showered his bounties upon them.

THE PROPHET MUSA

(peace be upon him)

The Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him) and his family settled in Egypt. They were called the Israelites. Gradually they increased in number and gained considerable power. These Israelites did not intermingle with other native people. They remained isolated and were considered as foreigners in Egypt.

Cruel Act of Pharaoh in respect of Israelites :

At that time Egypt was ruled by the king Fir'aūn (Pharaoh). He was arrogant, tyrant and powerful. He thought himself to be god. In their kingdom the people led miserable lives. They were forced to work as slaves. They were chained and whipped if they refused to work. The Israelites were looked down upon in that society. They suffered badly due to destitution and indigence. Some of them grew weak and died of starvation. When Pharaoh noticed that the Israelites were increasing in number, he was much alarmed. He held discussions with his counsellors on this topic. They decided that Israelites should be snubbed. They should not be allowed to become powerful and supreme in the land. They planned to oppress and persecute them in different ways. Pharaoh ordered that all male children born in the families of the Israelites should

be put to death. This tyrannical act of Pharaoh against the Israelites has been described in the following Verses of the Holy Qūr'ān :

“Surely Fir'aūn exalted himself in the land and divided its people into parties, oppressing one party from among them by killing their sons and sparing their women. Surely he was one of the mischief-makers.” (28 : 4, 5)

When the people heard those terrible orders they were much upset. The soldiers started complying with the orders of their king. Whenever they got wind of the male baby born to any family, they would yank him out of his mother's arms. They did not care for the feelings of the crying mothers. They used to throw the infants mercilessly into the river. It was an awful act of cruelty but no one dared to disobey the orders of Pharaoh because every one was much scared of him. Many innocent babies were drowned in this way and numerous unfortunate parents expressed lamentations over the death of their dear ones.

The Prophet Musa (Moses) Enclosed into Chest and Cast into the River : In that era one of the Israelite woman gave birth to a male baby who was extremely beautiful. The mother thought that the soldiers of Pharaoh would soon find him out. They would throw him to the fish in the river. God revealed to her to be patient and not to be frightened. She was communicated the glad-tidings that her son would become an Apostle. The newly born baby was named Mūsa (Moses). He was very attractive.

His mother fed and concealed him for a few months. When she was unable to hide him any longer, God guided her saying :

“And We revealed to Mūsa’s mother saying : Give him suck. When you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear nor grieve, surely We will restore him to you and make him one of the apostles.” (28 : 7)

The same direction is expressed in other Verses :

“Call to mind the occasion when We revealed to your mother : Put him into the chest and cast it down into the river, then the river shall throw him on the shore ; then shall take him upto one who is an enemy to Me and enemy to him and I cast down upon you love from Me and that you may be brought up before My eyes.” (20 : 38, 39)

When the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) had attained the age of a few months, his mother got made a very tight box. She put a blanket in the box. She lifted her affectionate son and kissed her again and again. She put him in the box with tears in her eyes. Her heart was beating violently. She pushed the box into the water when it was still dark. The box moved slowly oo the surface of the water. His sister watched the box at a distance but the mother went back home wailing and sobbing. She was full of anxiety due to the separation of her beloved baby.

The Prophet Mūsa’s sister was hiding from place to place along the shore of the river. She was constantly watching the box and praying for the safety of her brother. The box went on moving and

gradually came near the shore. Some people were washing their clothes at the shore. By chance they saw the box floating slowly. They waded through the water and picked up the box. They were greatly surprised to see a beautiful infant enclosed in the box. He had a smiling countenance.

The Prophet Musa Grows up in Pharaoh's House :

The people took the box to Pharaoh and his family. All of them were full of excitement. The Prophet Mūsa's sister followed them but no one recognized her. The wife of Pharaoh fell in love with the baby. She decided to make him her own son :

“And Fir'aūn's wife said : Joy of the eye to me and to you, do not slay him, may be he will be useful to us or we may take him for a son. But they knew not what they did.” (28 : 10)

The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) became awfully hungry. He began to cry out of hunger. The baby was handed over to a woman who was appointed to nurse him. He did not take her breast and kept on weeping. Every one was in a fix what to do. The sister of Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) who was standing near remarked : May I bring a woman whom the baby requires ? She was directed to go immediately and call her. She rushed towards her house and informed her mother of the whole situation. She requested her mother to accompany her to Pharaoh's house. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) was still crying due to hunger. The mother gave him her breast. He was much pleased and drank milk to his heart's content. Pharaoh's

wife requested the mother of Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) to stay with them and nurse him. The Holy Qur'ān states :

“So We restored him to his mother that her eyes might be refreshed and that she might not grieve and that she might know that the promise of Allāh is true but most of them do not know.”

(28 : 13)

The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) was brought up in Pharaoh's house like a prince. His mother was taking care of him and he was the apple of her eye. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) learnt a great deal about Pharaoh and his indecent ways of life. He came to know about his cruel treatment towards Israelites. Although he led a luxurious life yet deep inside his heart he had pains.

An Egyptian is Killed by Prophet Musa : One day he saw an Israelite fighting hard with one of the men of the King. They were shouting and hitting each other. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) appeared on the scene. He tried to pacify them. When he saw that the Egyptian was not going to spare him in spite of several requests, he lifted up his stick and hit the man of the King. The man became dizzy and fell to the ground with a bang. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) and his companions stepped forward to support the man but he was limp like a rag. Soon after he passed away..

The Prophet Musa Repents : The Prophet Mūsa

(peace be upon him) felt sorry for what had happened. It was an accidental and not intentional act. One blow of the stick is quite insufficient to cause the death of a person. His head was twirling. He called his action as a devil's doing who misled human beings. He realized his mistake and prayed for Divine protection. The Holy Qur'ān states :

“He found therein two men fighting, one being of his party and the other of his foes and he who was of his party cried out to him for help against him who was of his enemies. Mūsa struck him with his fist and despatched him. He said : This is of the devil's doing, surely he is an open enemy leading astray. He said : My Lord : Surely I have done harm to myself, so, You should protect me.” (28 : 18)

The Prophet Musa's Migration and Marriage :

Soon the news of the murder of a man spread far and wide. The people flew into a rage. They hatched a plan to kill the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him). He became scared and was directed to migrate to another place. The Holy Qur'ān states :

“A man came running from the remotest part of the City. He said : O' Mūsa ! Surely the Chiefs are consulting together to slay you. Therefore, begone at once. Surely I counsel you as a friend.” (28 : 19)

The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) packed up his luggage and left Pharaoh's house in the pitch dark when every one was enjoying a sound sleep. He

reached Midian after a long tiresome journey. He sat down to take rest near a watering place.

The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) saw two young girls waiting at a distance. Their sheep were standing near the spring for drinking water. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) thought that the girls needed some help. Although he was tired and hungry yet he wished to help them. He went upto the girls and asked if they needed help. The girls were modest and bashful. They said that they were waiting so that the shepherds might go away. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) drove the sheep to the spring to drink water. It was a kind act of Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him). The girls expressed a deep sense of gratitude for this favour. They took their sheep and proceeded towards their house. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) went back to rest. He became depressed and prayed to Almighty Allāh to help him. In the meanwhile two women came to him and said :

“My father invites you so that he may give you the reward of your having watered for us.”
(28 : 24)

The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) accompanied them. When he entered the house, he introduced himself politely. Soon after he dined with the members of the family. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) was asked to stay with them. The time passed on happily. One day the master of the house said :

“I desire to marry one of these two daughters

of mine to you on the condition that you should serve me for eight years but if you complete ten, it will be of your own free will, and I do not wish to be hard on you. If Allāh pleases, you will find me one of the good. He said : This will be an agreement between you and me, whichever of the two terms I fulfil, there shall be no wrong doing to me and Allāh is a witness of what we say." (28 : 27, 28)

According to the agreement Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) got married to one of the girls of that family. He took care of the farm and the sheep efficiently. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) had been away from his family for many years. He missed his kith and kin. One day he set out on a journey from Midian. His family accompanied him.

The Call of Prophet Musa to Prophethood : The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) crossed the sandy desert and reached the mountain, Tūr. He perceived a brilliant light from a distance. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) thought that to be fire and reached near it to warm himself. All of a sudden a voice was heard from the right side of the Valley. It uttered :

"Surely, I am your Lord : so put off your shoes because you are in the sacred Valley which is blessed twice. I have chosen you ; so hearken to what shall be revealed : Verily, I am Allāh, there is no god but I, therefore serve Me and keep up prayers for My remembrance." (20 : 22)

The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) was puzzled and scared. The thing which looked like fire was not fire in the real sense of the word but it was the reflection of the glory of God. It was a moment of great honour for the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him).

Some Miracles of Prophet Musa : God commanded Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) to throw the stick that was in his hand on the ground. He threw the stick in compliance with the orders. To his surprise he saw the stick moving like a long wiggling snake and it greatly scared him. He thought that it was going to bite him. God directed the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) not to lose courage and pick up the snake. He obeyed and caught hold of the terrible looking snake. When he touched it, it was restored to its former shape. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) was much amazed to see those happenings.

Soon afterwards God ordered the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) to thrust his hand into his armpit. He did so. When he took out his hand, it was shining white when he put his hand back into his armpit and pulled it out it had been changed into its normal position.

Allāh, the Almighty made the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) to perform those miracles so that he might feel better and become sure of the existence of Allāh and His power. He was going to derive benefits out of such miracles in future.

The Prophet Musa Settles in Egypt Again : Allāh commanded the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him)

to go to Egypt to deliver the Israelites from Pharaoh and reform his depraved people. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) was not good at arguing. He had an impediment in his tongue to speak freely. He sought permission from Allāh to take his brother Prophet Hārūn with him as an aider because he was an eloquent speaker. The permission was immediately granted.

The Prophet Musa Argues with Pharaoh : The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) settled with his family in Egypt. They went to Pharaoh to argue with him. They conveyed him the message of Allāh but he made fun of them. He did not lose heart and kept on preaching. The king and his people were not convinced. Finally in desperation, the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) said : O' King ! Do you like me to show you that my message is true? He replied in affirmative with an unbelieving smile on his face. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) threw his stick on the ground and it changed its shape as a terrible looking snake. The people were wonder-struck and got scared of it. When the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) picked it up, it became a stick again. Every one was much amazed. Then the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon im) put his hand in his armpit. When he got it out, his hand was shining brilliantly. The Holy Qur'ān states :

“Then he threw down his staff and lo ! it was an obvious serpent. And he drew forth his hand and lo ! it appeared white to the beholders.”

(26 : 32)

The Prophet Musa Contests with Magicians: The Chiefs said that the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) was an enchanter. He intended to turn the minds of the people. Pharaoh was much worried. He feared lest people should begin to follow him. He fixed a special day for contest between the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) and other magicians. He sent collectors in various parts of the country to bring enchanters to hold competition and prevail upon the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him). He promised to reward the winners.

On the appointed day thousands of people gathered there. There was a great deal of excitement. Every one was eager to see the performances of the magicians of the king and the miracles of Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him). First of all the royal magicians threw their sticks. They moved and looked like snakes from a distance. They deceived the eyes of the people and frightened them. The people were much surprised. They appreciated the magicians for their astonishing performances. Soon after the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) cast his stick. The stick became a hungry serpent by the order of Allāh. It wiggled and moved like a dart. It devoured every moving stick that the magician had thrown. The spectators were much impressed. Some of the priests thought that such miracles could be done only by the order of Allāh. Most of the magicians drew back humiliated and prostrated themselves adoring. They said: We believe in the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Prophet Mūsa and Prophet Hārūn (peace be upon them).

On seeing this state of affairs Pharoah was much worried. He became mad with rage because his men were inclined to follow the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) and adopt his new religion. He threatened them of dire consequences. He said :

“I shall certainly cut off your hands and your feet on opposite side, then I will crucify you altogether.” (7 : 124)

Persecution of Prophet Musa and his Followers : Pharaoh and his men began to persecute the followers of Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him). The Israelites remained patient. They began to worship and glorify God in their homes. They kept praying to God. They said :

“O’ Our Lord ! Make us not subject to persecution of the unjust people, and deliver us by Your mercy from the unbelieving people.” (20 : 86)

When the Israelites were under the burden of hardships and sufferings, Allāh ordered the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) to leave the area with his followers. He promised to save them. In compliance with the Commandment of Allāh the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) directed his people to migrate secretly to another place.

The Prophet Musa Leaves Egypt : When it was dark, a scanty band of the Israelites left Egypt. They took all precautionary measures to escape from the eye-sight of the guards. They moved as fast as they could with firm conviction that they would be saved

by Allāh. Next day the residence of the Israelites were found desolate and without hustle and bustle. Pharaoh was informed. He lost his temper and sent heralds to chase the absconders. He wanted to take revenge of his disgrace. He ordered his soldiers to arrest the Israelites and bring them back. When the followers of Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) were near the sea-shore, they heard the sound of the hoofs of their horses. They were much frightened. They thought that they would be overtaken and punished by the enemies.

The Sea Splits and Pharaoh is Drowned : When the Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) and his followers were being chased Allāh revealed this order to him :

“Strike the sea with the rod; and it clove asunder and each part become like a large mountain.” (26 : 60)

The water of the sea went up high with the great uproar. The bottom of the sea turned into dry land. It was an amazing miracle. The people could hardly believe their eyes. The Israelites ran desperately and went far ahead. Pharaoh and his huge army chased them in hostility. There was a great uproar again. The water from both the sides poured. It rushed over Pharaoh and his soldiers. They were completely drowned. The Holy Qur’ān relates this incident in the following Verses :

“And We made the children of Israel to pass through the sea, then Fir’aūn and his hosts followed them in hostility and for oppression

until when drowning overtook him, he said : I believe that there is no god but He in Whom the children of Israel believe and I am of those who submit. What now ! said God, and indeed you have been rebellious and was of the mischief makers. But this day We save you in your body so that you may be a sign to those after you and most surely most people are heedless of Our Signs". (20 : 90-92)

The body of Fir'aūn is still present in the Egyptian Museum as an admonitory sign to those who are transgressors.

When Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) and thousands of his followers got rid of Pharaoh, they expressed a deep sense of gratitude to Allāh. They had witnessed an impressive miracle. Now they were free to live according to the teachings of Allāh.

The Prophet Musa Receives Instructions : Allāh commanded Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) to go to a certain mountain for austerity. He had to stay there for forty days. During this period Allāh, the Almighty gave a lot of religious knowledge to Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him). He gave him the tablets which contained ten Commandments. One day he (Mūsa) said :

"My Lord ! Show me Thyself so that I may look upon Thee. He said : you cannot bear to see Me but look at the mountain, if it remains firm in its place, then you will see Me. When his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain,

He made it crumble and Mūsa fell down in swoon. When he recovered, he said : Glory be to You : I turn to You and I am the first of believers". (7 : 142)

At the end of the appointed time Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) went to his people to tell them about the revelations which he had received.

Israelites Worship the Calf : The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) was much grieved to know that his followers had become addicted to praying to the cow instead of Allāh. Whenever his brother Prophet Hārūn (peace be upon him) forbade them to do so, they made fun of him. Sometimes they tortured him. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) tried hard to uproot this form of idolatry from the hearts of the Israelites. Some men who had gone astray, repented but most of them insisted on worshipping a cow. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) said to his people :

"Surely, Allāh commands you that you should sacrifice a cow." (2 : 71)

Most of them did so hesitatingly but the others refused. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) kept on conveying the people the new message of God.

An Other Miracle : One season came there was hardly any rain. It overtook the people with draughts and diminution of fruit. There was an acute shortage of water and food. The people began to die of starvation. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him)

prayed to Allāh and He provided them with eatables. Water was not available in the area. They approached Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) for help. He prayed to Allāh for a miracle. Allāh directed the Prophet to hit a special high cliff with his stick. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) touched the cliff saying : By the name of our Lord, Almighty Allāh. At once the water gushed forth. There were twelve places in that cliff from which sprang out cool clear water. The people were much amazed at the sight of this wonderful miracle. The Holy Qur'ān states :

“And when Mūsa prayed for drink for his people, We said : Smite with your staff the rock, and there gushed out therefrom twelve springs so that each tribe knew their drinking place. Eat and drink of that which Allāh has provided and do not act corruptly making mischief in the earth.” (2 : 60)

The Israelites were of twelve branches each a descendant of a son of Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him). So each branch came to drink from one of the springs of water from that cliff. The people drank water to their hearts content. They do not have to shove and push for the water because Allāh gave them twelve springs.

Israelites Win Victory and Prosper : After staying in the desert for some time Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) planned to proceed towards the blessed land, Palestine. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) sent twelve men in advance to go and had a bird's eye view of the blessed land. They came back

after many days. They told him that there were fertile farms and green trees. There was plenty of water. It made every one eager to go there. It was also reported that the owners of the blessed land were strong and brave. They had invincible armies. It was impossible to capture that land without fighting. The Israelites were much terrified because they were weak and armless. The Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) and a small group of Israelites wished to fight tooth and nail whereas most of them did not agree to fighting. Some of them said to Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him): You go with your God and fight against them. We will stay here and wait.

As the years passed, they increased in number. They gained strength gradually. They formed a small army of their own and marched with faith in their hearts towards the rich blessed land. They fought hard and became victorious in the battle. They became the rulers of Palestine. The inhabitants of that land lived with them in peace and harmony. Allāh showered favours on Israelites and they began to prosper wonderfully.

CHAPTER 19

THE PROPHET 'AZIZ (UBAIR OR EZRA) (peace be upon him)

The lineage genealogy of the Prophet 'Aziz (peace be upon him) linked with that of Harun bin 'Umrān. The name of his father was Khalqiyah. The Holy Qur'ān has made mention of him in the Surah Immunity. The Jews regarded him as the son of Allāh as the Christians thought 'Esa (peace be upon him) as His son. The Holy Qur'ān affirms:

The Jews say : 'Aziz is the son of Allāh and the Christians say : The Messiah is the son of Allāh. Such they say in their mouth ! These resemble the sayings of the infidels of old. Allāh do battle with them. How are they misguided ? (9 : 30)

He was the son of Sharahya, the Scribe. He was in his teens when Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem and put it to rout. When he attained the age of forty years the crown of Prophethood was conferred upon his head. He began to perform the duty of showing the path of righteousness to the depraved humanity. He was held in high esteem among his followers. When the Israelites planned to reconstruct the Bait-ul-Maqdis, he exercised his influence to gain co-operation of the Government officials. He assisted the Jews to carry out their plan.

Al-Baizawi says : During the Babylonish captivity the Torah was lost and there was none who remembered it. Allāh raised up 'Aziz (peace be upon him) from the dead one century after his burial. He dictated to the scribes from his memory the whole Jewish law (Torah). He would have been fully worthy of having been the law-giver if Musa (peace be upon him) had not preceded him. History bears testimony to this fact that the Prophet 'Aziz (peace be upon him) guided the Israelites during the period which lasted from the destruction of Jerusalem to the reconstruction of Bait-ul-Maqdis.

It has been narrated that a person rode upon an ass and passed near a city called Jerusalem. He possessed a basket of figs and a vessel of the juice of grapes. He wondered at the power of Allāh and said : How will Allāh re-build and populate it again ? 'Aziz (peace be upon him) was much shocked at the sight of dilapidated dwellings. When he was under the sway of utter disappointment, Allāh caused him to die for a hundred years. Then He raised him to life and said : How long have you tarried here ? He replied : I have tarried for a day or a part of it. He slept in the first part of the day and was deprived of his life. He was reanimated at sunset. Allāh, the Exalted said : You have tarried a hundred years. Look at your food and drink. They are as fresh as you have left them. They have remained unchanged even after the passage of century. Look at the ass. It has been decomposed and reduced to skeleton of bones. I have wrought this miracle to make manifest to you that I have the power to immune or destroy anything.

The Holy Qur'ān narrates this miracle in the following Verses :

And how He demeaned him who passed by a city which had been laid in ruins. He said : How shall Allāh give life to this city after it had been destroyed. And Allāh caused him to die for a hundred years and then raised him to life. He said : How long have you waited ? He said : I have waited a day or part of a day. Allāh said : Look on your food and your drink ; they are not corrupted. Look on your ass, We would make you a sign for men and look on the bones of your ass, how We will raise them, then clothe them with flesh and when this was shown to him, he said : I acknowledge that Allāh has power to do all things. (2 : 270)

Allāh commanded the Prophet 'Aziz (peace be upon him) to go to Jerusalem to render services to the cause of religion. He passed away at Sa'irabad near 'Iraq. He was buried there. Some historians say that his grave is in Damascus.

THE PROPHET AYYUB

(peace be upon him)

The Prophet Ayyūb (peace be upon him) was one of the descendants of the Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) and a nephew of Prophet Ya'qūb (peace be upon him). He was sent to reform the people who lived in the desert situated in the north eastern corner of Palestine.

When Ayyūb (Job) was chosen to be the Prophet, he started to teach the people about God and His religion. He advised the people to do good and shun evil. As usual with all the Prophets very few people believed in him in the beginning but gradually the number of his followers began to increase.

The Prophet Ayyub was Well Off : The Prophet Ayyūb (peace be upon him) was a prosperous man with firm faith in Allāh. He possessed vast farms, enormous wealth, many cattle and valuable property but these things did not make him arrogant. His wealth provided him with a medium by means of which he sought Allāh's grace.

The Prophet Ayyub Displays Patience : The Prophet Ayyūb (peace be upon him) was a pattern of humility and faith in Allāh. He was very patient. He suffered from a number of calamities but did not utter a single word of complaint.

One day his big farm was attacked by the thieves. They killed many of his servants and carried away forcibly all his cattle. The Prophet Ayyūb (peace be upon him) did not feel sorry at this loss and thanked Allāh. After some time the roof of the house fell down and many members of his family were crushed. The Prophet Ayyūb (peace be upon him) was much shocked but he held fast to his faith in Allāh. He neither shed a tear nor heaved a sigh. He prostrated before the Almighty. He remarked that possessions and children were the gifts from Allāh. If He had taken His things, it was useless to lament over their loss.

After a few years Prophet Ayyūb (peace be upon him) suffered from a skin disease. His parts of body were covered with loathsome sores. He had many ugly looking ulcers on his face and hands. The sores were full of worms. It is narrated that he picked up those worms which fell from his abscess and praised Allāh for creating them. Above all, his false friends attributed his calamities to his sins. They ridiculed and looked down upon him. All the persons deserted him with the exception of his faithful wife, Rahima. She also grew tired of him in the long run and prayed for his death. She cursed her husband for retaining integrity in Allāh. When Prophet Ayyūb (peace be upon him) was in an extremely pathetic condition he prayed :

“Truly adversity has afflicted me and You are Most Merciful of all who show mercy.” (21 : 83)

Allāh accepted his prayer. The Holy Qur’ān

affirms :

“Then We heard his prayer and removed that adversity from which he suffered, and We gave him his household and the like thereof along with them, a mercy from Our store and a remembrance for the worshippers.” (21: 84)

The Prophet Ayyub Recovers and Prospers : Allāh turned to him with mercy. He was commanded to strike the earth with his foot. He complied with the order and water from the spring gushed forth. He took a bath with the water and got cured from his evil disease. After this he was restored to prosperity. The Prophet Ayyūb (peace be upon him) knelt and prayed expressing a deep sense of gratitude to Allāh. He never forgot His favours, mercy and love.

The Prophet Ayyūb (peace be upon him) was one of the celebrated Prophets. His example illustrates that those who remain patient under the stress of all circumstances, are never deprived of high rewards. The Holy Qur’ān affirms :

“And surely We try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and crops, but give glad-tidings to the steadfast, who when a misfortune befalls them, say : Lo ! we are Allāh’s (possession of Allāh) and to Him shall we surely return. Such are they on whom are blessings from their Lord, and mercy. Such are the rightly-guided.” (2 : 155-157)

THE PROPHET DHUL-KIFL
(ISAIH OR KHARQIL BIN THAURI):
(peace be upon him)

Dhul-kifl (peace be upon him) was the Prophet of Allāh. The Holy Qur'ān has made mention of him in the following two Verses :

And Ismā'il and Idris and Dhul-kifl ; all were men of constancy and patience. We admitted them into our mercy because they were of the righteous ones. (21 : 85, 86)

And remember Ismā'il, Elisha and Dhul-kifl. Each of them was of the company of the good. (38 : 48)

Al-Baizawi says that he was so called because he had to do double the work of the Prophets of his time.

He is identified with Ezekiel of the Bible who was carried away to Babylon after the destruction of Jerusalem. He was chained and imprisoned. He bore all hardships with patience and continued reproving the evils in the Bani Isrā'il. Ibn Jarir, an interpreter has narrated an event which throws some light on his life. When Al-Yasa (peace be upon him) grew old, he wished to appoint a suitable person

Allāh be upon him) had only attained the age of twenty-five, while Khadija was close upon forty. In spite of this disparity in age, the marriage proved a blessed one. Khadija was first wife of Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). God conferred upon her the honour of being *Umm-ul-Mu'minin*, mother of the faithful. She was so obedient that she never raised a rival even in the heart of her illustrious husband. Their marriage lasted for 26 years, but she was his sole and beloved spouse until the day of her death. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had three sons and four daughters from her. The surname of Abū al-Qāsim was granted to him due to his son Al-Qāsim. All his three sons died in infancy. His youngest daughter Fātima was married to 'Alī, the fourth Caliph. She was the mother of Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥussain, the greatest martyr of Islām.

The Reconstruction of the Ka'ba : In the year 605 A.D., the Ka'ba had been badly damaged. The Meccans thought of rebuilding the Temple of God, Ka'ba, a sacred place for worship. All the tribes took active part in this sacred work but the Black Stone (*Hajar al-Aswad*) proved to be a bone of contention amongst them. A dispute arose over this matter. Every one of them desired to have the honour of placing this holy and precious relic in position. There was not the slightest chance of their arriving at an agreement on this point. It was expected that the quarrel might assume a bloody complexion. Some of the tribes dipped their fingers in cups filled with blood, indicating thereby they

would resort to war to secure the honour. At last, an old man Abū Ummaya said, "The person who enters the gate of Ka'ba the earliest tomorrow, should act as an umpire to settle the dispute." All the tribes agreed to this proposal. Next morning the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) entered the gate first of all. All were delighted to see him because he was the right judge. He spread his mantle on the ground and placed the Black Stone on it. He, then, called upon the disputing Chiefs to share the honour of lifting up the stone to position by holding the corners of the mantle. He put the relic in its place with his own hands. His wisdom saved the Meccans from bloodshed. He had fully satisfied all the rival groups without favouring one more than the other.

The Prophethood : God had inspired Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) with the love for solitude. He devoted most of the time to meditation and religious worship that swayed his soul. There was a cave called Hira which was situated at a distance of three miles from Mecca. It was selected by Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to seek seclusion therein. He would confine himself in the cave with provisions and water. He stayed there till he had nothing left to eat. In the beginning, Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was visited by strange visions. At the age of forty, he was honoured with the Revelation of the Divine Message at night during the month of Ramaḍān. The Merciful Lord proved His generosity to His servant who attained Prophethood and was

Afterwards the Prophet Dhul-kifl (peace be upon him) left his followers and migrated to Babylon. He died there..

THE PROPHET YUNUS

(peace be upon him)

The Prophet Yūnus (peace be upon him) is also addressed by two other surnames "Dhun-Nūn" (Lord of the Fish) and "Sāhibil-Hūt" (Companion of the Fish). The Holy Qur'ān says :

"And (mention) Dhun-Nun when he went off in anger and deemed that We had no power over him but he cried out in darkness, saying : There is no god save Thee. Be Thou glorified ! Lo ! I have been an evil-doer." (21 : 87)

"But wait thou for thy Lord's decree and be not like the Sāhibil-Hūt who cried out in fear." (68 : 48)

Yūnus (Jonah) was the son of Mitta according to a Tradition quoted in *Sahih Bukhāri* but the *Torah* states that his father's name was Amittai.

When the prophethood was conferred upon him, he was commanded to go Nineveh for preaching the true faith of God. Nineveh was situated on the right bank of the river Tigris. It was the capital city of Assyria. Its people were arrogant and conceited. They led sinful lives. The Prophet Yūnus (peace be upon him) tried his best to reform them but they turned a deaf ear to his advice and warnings. Soon

he began to feel disgusted. Consequently human frailty overpowered him. He flew into a rage and invoked Allāh's wrath on the people of Nineveh. He became impatient and departed without waiting for further command from Allāh. He imagined perhaps God had no power over him. The Prophet Yūnus (peace be upon him) proceeded towards the sea and took a boat. Unfortunately the boat was caught in a storm. The sailors held him responsible for bringing misfortune to the boat. They decided to throw Prophet Yūnus (peace be upon him) into the water but the passengers did not agree to their decision. Then lots were drawn and the name of Prophet Yūnus (peace be upon him) came out. The Prophet Yūnus was thrown into the sea for the safety of the boat. When Prophet Yūnus (peace be upon him) fell into the water, a great fish with capacious belly drew him in. He was in extreme distress. He realized that he had to suffer for committing dereliction towards his duty as a prophet. Instead of running away he must have relied upon the power of Allāh even in the most discouraged circumstances.

The Prophet Yūnus (peace be upon him) felt penitence and supplicated to Allāh in the humblest tone. His repentance was accepted and he was caused to be delivered ashore. He was provided with the shelter of a spreading plant. The Holy Qur'ān relates this incident in the following Verses :

“And lo ! Yūnus verily was of those sent (to warn). When he fled into the ladenship, and then drew lots and was of those rejected, and

the fish swallowed him while he was blame-worthy, and had he not been one of those who glorify Allāh, he would have tarried in its belly till the Day of Resurrection, then We cast him on a desert shore while he was sick and We caused a tree of gourd to grow above him, and We sent him to a hundred thousand (folk) or more. And they believed, therefore We gave him comfort for a while." (27 : 139-148)

When Prophet Yūnus (peace be upon him) regained his health, he was commanded to go back to the same town and fulfil his mission of making the people give up their iniquitous life. Now the people of Nineveh repented and followed their Prophet. God showed mercy and they prospered remarkably. They got a new lease of glorious life. The Holy Qur'ān says :

"When they believed, We removed from them the torment of disgrace in the life of the world and permitted them to enjoy their life for a while." (10 : 98)

Gradually the people of Nineveh again adopted evil ways of life. They indulged in idol-worship and debauchery. Eventually they were destroyed by the Scythians. The Prophet Yūnus (peace be upon him) died in Nineveh and was buried there. According to the story of some of the historians his tomb is in the village Halmol about ten miles away from Hebron.

THE PROPHET ZAKARIYA (peace be upon him)

Zakariya (Zachariah) was an illustrious Prophet of the Israelites. He was one of the descendants of Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him). The name of his wife was al-Yashbi' who belonged to the family of Prophet Hārūn (peace be upon him). The Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him) was the patron of Mary, the mother of Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him). He was the trustee of Hekal. He worked as a carpenter and earned his livelihood.

The Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him) kept the torch of Mosaic law burning. He used to pray devotionally and preach zealously. His wife and he were the symbols of piety and righteousness. Most of his kinsmen lacked in spirit of true faith. As they were seduced, they were inclined to doing evil deeds. They were going out of the right path. The Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him) was much anxious about this state of affairs. He had no offspring and there was no suitable person to hold the office of priesthood of Hekal after his death. He was desirous of having a son to become his good successor. He did not long for a son to satisfy a mere human desire for one's progeny. He wanted to have a son to maintain the warmth of religious

activities. One night he stood in prayer in his sanctuary and prayed to Allāh to bless him with a good son. He was conscious that he was in an advanced age and his wife was barren and unable to raise any issue. He had full faith in Allāh Who possesses power to do whatever He wills. He came to know through his prophetic insight that Allāh would grant his request. He would be blessed with a good son to act as his heir who could guide the people aright.

God in His infinite mercy removed the defect of his wife's barrenness so that she might become mother. She gave birth to Prophet Yaḥyā (peace be upon him) who was destined to be honourable, chaste, and a prophet from among the righteous. The Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him) felt satisfied as his son grew up and became a symbol of piety. He was graced with wisdom, obedience and asceticism.

The Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him) continued preaching the religion of Allāh even in old age. The Israelites were indulged in mischief-making and wickedness. They had not only ignored the teachings of his Prophet but tortured him also. The Holy Qur'ān makes mention of the cruel acts of the Israelites in the following Verses :

“Lo ! those who disbelieve the revelations of Allāh and slay the Prophets wrongfully and slay those of mankind who enjoin equity, promise hem a painful doom.” (3 : 21)

The Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him) did

not die a natural death. One day the Israelites decided to put him to death. He hid himself in the covern of the tree. The Jews began to saw that part of the tree. The Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him) did not even utter a faint cry. His body was cut into two pieces.

CHAPTER 24

THE PROPHET YAHYĀ

(peace be upon him)

Yahyā (John the Baptist) was the son of Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him). His birth was a miracle because he was born of a barren mother and an aged father. In the fagging part of life Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him) prayed to Allāh to bless him with a son who could prove to be a successful heir and preacher of the religion of Allāh. His prayer was promptly granted. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“O’ Zakariya ! Lo ! We bring you a glad tidings of a son whose name is Yahyā. We have given the same name to none before him.”
(19 : 7)

The Prophet Yahyā (peace be upon him) was dedicated to the noble work of leading men to the path of salvation. He exhorted his people to have unstinted faith in God. He moved among the humble and despised soft raiment. He was not arrogant. He spent most of his life in wilderness. He was pure and devout. He was dutiful towards his parents. The Holy Qur'ān says :

“(And it was said unto his son) O’ John ! Hold fast the scripture. And We gave him wisdom when he was a child ! And compassion from

Our presence and punity, and he was devout. And dutiful towards his parents. And he was not arrogant, rebellious. Peace on him the day he was born and the day he dies and the day he shall be raised alive." (19 : 12-15)

The Prophet Yahyā (peace be upon him) moved to the desert of Judea. He dressed himself in a robe made of camel hair. He ate simple food and wild honey. His sermons were most impressive and people flocked to hear his trumpet message. The whole of the Jordan valley was baptised due to his preachings. The Prophet Yahyā (peace be upon him) was the precursor of Prophet 'Isā (Jesus Christ). He was his cousin and contemporary as well. His fidelity to his mission as a preacher soon deprived him of his liberty and subsequently his life.

The Roman Ruler Herod Antipas was the ruler of Galilee. He had an adulterous relations with Herodias, the wife of his brother Herod Philip. The Prophet Yahyā (peace be upon him) reproached him for this grave sin. Herod Antipas got annoyed and imprisoned him till his execution. Once Herod Antipas arranged a grand feast. Herodias allowed her daughter, Salome to dance. The Ruler was fascinated with the performance of the dancing girl. He declared that he would grant whatever Salome wanted. She immediately made a demand for the head of Prophet Yahyā (peace be upon him). Herod was in a fix what to do. He had no alternative to adhere to his words. So Prophet Yahyā (peace be upon him) was beheaded at the instigation of the mother of that girl with whom Herod was infatuated. His grave is in Umayyah Mosque in Syria.

THE PROPHET 'ISĀ

(peace be upon him)

The Israelites had settled in the blessed land, Palestine. They ruled for a long time. They had a vast kingdom. Allāh, the Almighty chose many prophets from among them. They followed the Holy Book, the *Torah*. The Prophet Dāwūd (peace be upon him) and his son Prophet Sulaimān (peace be upon him) won great popularity as kings and commanded high respect. Their followers believed in God and led noble lives. As the time passed by, they began to pay less attention to the teachings of God. They forgot the Divine favours. They made alterations in the Holy Book according to their own tastes. Most of the Israelites adopted indecent ways of life and committed major sins. At that time there existed a powerful kingdom in the world. It was called the kingdom of Romans. They were polytheists and pagans. They did not worship one God and prayed to many idols made of stones. The Roman society was divided into two factions. The ruling class was very strong and arrogant whereas the ordinary people lived in misery. They were ill-treated as slaves. The female sex enjoyed no privilege in that era. Palestine, the blessed land was ruled by Herod, a cruel king. The people disliked him. They were scared stiff of him. They could not utter a

word of complaint against him lest they should be put to sword.

Allāh, the Beneficent, showed His favours and wanted to guide the depraved humanity to the right path. He desired to make the people believe in Allāh through miracles. Maryam (Mary) was a beautiful maiden. She was virtuous, abstemious and chaste. She used to pray to Allāh frequently. She grew up in the house of Prophet Zakariya (peace be upon him) and learnt a good deal about Allāh and His religion.

One night Maryam was engaged in glorifying the Almighty, Allāh. Suddenly she saw a handsome looking young man. She got embarrassed and her face turned pale. She felt jiltery and had goose pimples on her skin. Soon after she got tranquillity of mind. She heard a voice from the invisible world :

“I am an angel of Allāh. He has sent me to inform you that you are going to have a baby.”

Maryam was much perplexed. As she was a virgin, it was quite impossible for her to give birth to baby without entering into matrimonial allegiance with an opposite sex.

Once again the Angel remarked : It is the Will of Allāh, the Almighty that you should give birth to a fatherless baby. It is easy for Him to do what He pleases. He has His own reasons. I, however, convey you the good news. Soon after the Angel vanished. Maryam became wet with perspiration.

She apprehended that her name would be sullied if she gave birth to a baby before marriage.

After some days Maryam became pregnant. Many people began to level false accusations against her. They calumniated her for developing contraband relations with a man. The whole population of the town derided Maryam. She was feeling terribly ashamed on hearing the baseless charges of slanders. She had a firm faith in Allāh. She was sure that Allāh would help her in washing away a blot on her fair reputation. She prayed to her Lord frequently to save her honour. The people passed taunting remarks about her every now and then.

When she was reduced to straits by the mischievous persons, she decided to leave Nazareth and settle in another town. She went to a locality called Bethlehem, seventy-one miles away from her native town.

She resided near a manger under a palm-tree. Soon after her arrival there Prophet 'Isā (Jesus Christ) was born. Maryam washed, cleansed and dressed him. He looked very beautiful and attractive. Some of the people got wind of that incident and visited Maryam who gave birth to a fatherless baby. They also made fun of her and began to ask questions. As Maryam had been directed by Allāh not to utter a single word for three days from the moment she gave birth to a baby. She complied with the orders and refrained from talking. When the people pressed her hard to reply to their questions, the baby began to

utter some words to clarify the position of his pious mother. The listeners were much surprised. They were full of excitement. 'Isā (Jesus Christ) claimed to be the Prophet of Allāh. He advised the people to follow the right path and do noble acts. When the people got a convincing proof regarding the truthfulness and chastity of Maryam, they were much impressed and amazed.

The birth of Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) became a talk of the town. Herod, the king, got wind of that miracle. He became worried lest people should obey the directions of the newly born Prophet and neglect his orders. He issued terrible orders to kill all those babies who are under the age of two years. The parents became much upset because they thought that they would be deprived of their affectionate children after the implementation of those orders.

Allāh guided Maryam to migrate to Egypt to seek protection for her baby. She carried out the orders and reached Egypt after a troublesome journey. They stayed away from home for twelve years. The Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) grew up gradually and Allāh gave him a good deal of wisdom and knowledge. In the meantime Herod passed away and the people took a sigh of relief. Maryam felt a great pleasure. She picked up her belongings and proceeded towards the blessed land again. She, along with her baby reached there after a long journey.

The Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) was handsome and dignified. When he had attained the

age of thirty years, he began to preach the religion of Allāh. Most of the people were not convinced and thus he was exposed to ridicules. The Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) entreated Allāh to grant him a miraculous power to impress the people. Allāh gave him that power. He showed many miracles which won the hearts of the people. Gradually they became his followers and began to believe in him and his message.

One day Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) was preaching to a large gathering. He exhorted the people to believe in Allāh and follow His religion. Most of them turned a deaf ear to his instructions. The Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) tried to convince them with a miracle. He took some wet clay in his hand and made the statue of a bird with it. He blew his breath on the clay. It became a real bird with wings, eyes and legs by Allāh's power. It flew up chirping in the sky. The people looked at the bird but could hardly believe their eyes. They were wonder struck at the sight of this miracle. They were so impressed that they began to take the oath of allegiance to Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him).

The Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) kept on preaching and many people began to believe in true religion. One day a man came limping towards him. He had suffered from leprosy. He was looking terrible due to lumps on his face. His fingers were crooked and he had lost some toes. The people were scared of him. They detested him but the heart of Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) was bleeding for the

wretched man. The diseased man said in the weak tone: Cure me, cure me. I am disgusted with my life. The Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) knelt and supplicated for his recovery. He patted at his shoulders. He recovered and his face became clear. All the lumps vanished in the twinkling of an eye. The crowd was much amazed at the sight of this miracle. Every one was much impressed. The people began to follow the teachings of the Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him).

One day the Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) was going through the street which was narrow and winding. He came across a man who was blind and dumb. The Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) decided to show mercy to him because he was kind-hearted. He put his hand on the shoulder of the man. The blind man opened his eyes and Allāh restored his eye sight. Moreover he was endowed with the power of talking. He expressed a deep sense of gratitude for the kindness shown by the Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him). This miracle impressed the spectators and they began to follow the teachings of Allāh.

A man, Lazarus passed away and his sisters, Mary and Martha fell into melancholy and extinction. They were making preparations to perform burial ceremonies. The mourners flocked at the residence of the deceased. Suddenly the Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) appeared on the scene. He knelt down and started to pray to Almighty Allāh. After a short time Lazarus was revived by the grace of Allāh. He got up and began to talk. Every one jumped out of

joy. They began to acknowledge the supreme power of their Lord. The Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) came to remind the people of the teachings of the other Prophets. He advised the people to believe in Allāh and pray to Him only. He asked them not to indulge in back-biting, oppression, sinfulness and impiety. He directed his followers to do noble deeds. He taught them to be loving and tolerant. He also had his own revelations. The Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) had twelve disciples who assisted him in preaching. They helped him in spreading the religion of Allāh during the life of Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) and afterwards.

The preaching work by Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) lasted for three years. A considerable number of people began to follow him. They adopted good ways of life. The Romans and the Jews were much worried because of the prevailing influence of Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) and his disciples. They feared lest they should rise in revolt against them. They decided 'Isā, the Prophet to be crucified.

Allāh loved his Prophet. He wanted to save him. On the other hand the Romans made a heavy big cross of wood to put their plan into practice. There was a large gathering and the soldiers were standing all around where 'Isā, the Prophet was supposed to be crucified. Even those people who were against the teachings of Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) were feeling queezy inside. They did not agree with the idea of crucifying him. Allāh ordered some one who bore resemblance to Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon

him) to take the place of the Prophet on the cross. In fact the man who was analogous to Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) was crucified and his own life was saved in this manner.

Most of the teachings of Prophet 'Isā (peace be upon him) are still in the Gospel but some of the things written in the Bible are not in original form. They were changed and some additions as well as subtractions have been made in his teachings.

THE LAST PROPHET MUHAMMAD (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him)

The Arabs Before the Dawn of Islam : Arabia has the honour of giving birth to many glorious and illustrious Prophets. Before the dawn of Islam, the inhabitants of Arabia had faith in three Prophets—Ibrāhim, Mūsa and 'Isā (Jesus Christ). The Arabs had forsaken the teachings of their Prophets. They had fallen into evil ways. They did not believe in one God. They worshipped self-made idols. Even the Sacred Temple of Allāh, *Baital-Haram*, reconstructed by Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) for the worship of Almighty Allāh, had within its portals three hundred and sixty images. The Arabs had adopted the practice of idolatry. The people in general were illiterate. They had gone astray. They did not follow the right path. They were sinners, being addicted to drinking and gambling. Their morals had been ruined. The poor slaves were deprived of their rights. They were just like dumb driven cattle. The weak were plundered by the strong. There was no security of life, property and honour. The darkness of anarchy and ignorance prevailed in every nook and corner of Arabia. Voluptuousness was the order of the day. Women commanded no respect in the society of the Arabs. It was very difficult for them to defend their quality of chastity.

The parents would rather get rid of their female off-springs by burying them alive soon after their birth. They fought among themselves on trivial matters. Once they fell out, their bitterness and enmity lasted for generations. In those days, terrible fights between different tribes and families submerged all Arabia into a sea of blood. In spite of all these shortcomings and defects, the Arabs possessed some good qualities of head and heart. They were courageous, proud, aristocratic and wise. They were generous towards their guests.

The Family of Muhammad : The Quraish occupied a prominent place among the Arab tribes, but the Hashimites, in particular, were held in high esteem. They were highly respected by all. 'Abdul Muttalib, the custodian of the Ka'ba, had ten sons. The youngest of them, 'Abdullāh by name, was his favourite son. He was considered to be the most handsome youth in Mecca. He was married to Āmina, the daughter of Wahb ibn Manaf. A few days after his marriage 'Abdullāh had to proceed on business to Syria with a caravan. While returning, he fell seriously ill and breathed his last at Medina. Thus, Āmina became a widow. Unfortunately, 'Abdullāh did not live long to enjoy the happiness of seeing his expected off-spring. Āmina had no alternative but to reside with 'Abdul Muttalib, her father-in-law. So, she went to him to spend the rest of her life with him.

The Birth of Muhammad : The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was born

on Monday, April 29, 571 A.D. The rays of Divine Light illuminated his lovely face. There was a spring-tide in the garden of humanity and a breeze rich in sweet fragrance blew. Although he was an orphan, he was destined to lead mankind to the right path and bless the universe with his guidance. 'Abdul Muttalib was overjoyed to see his grandson whose father had not been alive. He kissed him affectionately. He took him to the Holy Ka'ba to express his gratitude and to invoke a blessing on the child. He was named 'Muḥammad' which means 'the one who has been highly praised'.

The Child is Handed Over to Halima : The atmosphere of Mecca was injurious to infants due to its extremely hot climate. Besides, it was a custom among the leading and respectable citizens to give their babies under the charge of Bedouin nurses who brought them up in the open and wholesome air of the countryside where the nomads dwelt. The children learnt the pure Bedouin dialect. Accordingly, a fortunate woman was providentially chosen for the honour of suckling the Prophet of Allāh and she was Halima, signifying, 'the gentle'. Halima herself narrates, "It was a barren year. My husband and I suffered from dire distress. We could hardly keep the pot boiling. We decided to go to Mecca to seek a foster-child, expecting financial aid from his parents. We joined a caravan along with several women of our tribe. They, too, proceeded on the same errand. Our ass was thin and weak. It lagged behind. We reached Mecca when all the new-born babies had already been allotted to the other women. Only one

child, Muḥammad by name, had been left. He was an orphan. He belonged to a poor family. None was ready to take charge of such a poor baby. He was neglected by all the nurses. We likewise turned away from him, but I felt ashamed at the thought that I should have to journey back empty handed. Moreover, I was deeply moved at the sight of that innocent and poor infant who was bound to wither away in the unwholesome air of the city. My heart was filled with compassion. I decided to adopt the orphan child who was verily blessed." For about five years he remained under the supervision of Halima. When he attained the age of six, his mother took him to Medina where they paid a visit to the grave of 'Abdullāh.

Amina and 'Abdul Muttalib Pass Away : Under the vigilant eyes of his kind and noble mother Āmina, Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) grew up handsome and intelligent, but he was not destined to enjoy maternal affection for a long time. On her way back from Medina, Āmina died suddenly. She was buried in the graveyard near Al-Abwa, a village. This shock came to Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) as a thunderbolt from the blue. He bore this loss patiently. Umm Aiman, a slave girl, brought the sad child to Mecca and delivered him to 'Abdul Muttalib who had always shown him boundless affection. Once again fate decreed that Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) should be deprived of the gentle love of his grandfather. 'Abdul Muttalib passed away at the age of ninety-five. He

was unanimously mourned by his fellow-citizens. This was a sad demise, but Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) did not lose heart. He faced the difficulties of life with perseverance. Afterwards, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) visited the grave of his beloved mother. The tears rolled down his cheeks. Off and on he remembered his gentle mother on memorable occasions.

The Prophet Muhammad Under the Supervision of Abu Talib : When ‘Abdul Muttalib felt the approach of death, he advised Abū Tālib to look after the child. He did so in compliance with his directions. He showered his affection and kindness on his nephew. He fed him with his own hands and remained with him all the time. The child was equally devoted to his uncle. Unlike other children, he was not given to wasting his time and playing about. He liked cleanliness. He never complained of hunger and thirst. A little water from the Zamzam well would suffice for him. He had decent habits and polished manners. He was modest and retiring in disposition. He was sincere and truthful. Although he lived in the company of those who were sunk in evils from head to foot, he was so honest and true that the Meccans gave him titles of *Amin* the trustworthy, and *Sadiq*, the truthful. The Prophet had to work for his uncle. He looked after the sheep and goats of his uncle.

Meeting with the Monk Bahira : Bahira was a learned Christian monk. On one occasion he happened to see the Prophet (peace and blessings of

Allāh be upon him). He said, "O' young man! I have some questions to ask of you. By Lāt and 'Uzza, will you answer them?" Bahira intended to put him to a test by invoking the idols Lāt and 'Uzza. Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) replied, "Put no question to me in the names of Lāt and 'Uzza, for there is nothing on this earth that I hate more than them." Then, Bahira asked, "By Allāh, will you answer me?" Then Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) replied, "Now ask the question of me and I shall answer you." Thereupon Bahira interrogated him on different matters. Finally, the young man turned to go away. The collar of his cloak turned aside slightly and Bahira caught sight of the "Seal of Prophecy", imprinted on the lad's back exactly on the same spot as indicated by the Sacred Scriptures. Bahira informed Abū Tālib that Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was the Prophet of Allāh and that he should be carefully watched lest his opponents should harm him.

Journey to Syria: When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) grew young, he made up his mind to enter business. His uncle was not in a position to give him financial aid. He had no money to invest in business. There lived in Mecca in those days a chaste and a rich widow. Her name was Khadija. She belonged to a noble family. When she heard that the people were unanimous in extolling Muḥammad's well-merited reputation, she decided to entrust him with her business. She requested him to undertake a trading journey to Syria as her agent.

Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) accepted the offer with the consent of Abū Tālib. Maisara, a slave and right-hand man of Khadija accompanied the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) with the Caravan. Maisara was greatly impressed by the wisdom, honesty and integrity of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). It was a very successful business trip. In this mission, he earned a good deal of profit. Maisara gave a glowing account of the whole affair to his mistress. He spoke very highly of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). The noble and generous woman rewarded Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) by giving him an excess the amount, she had promised. She asked him to take care of her entire business.

The Marriage of Prophet Muhammad to Khadija : Khadija was greatly impressed by the wisdom, honesty, truthfulness and sincerity of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). She was also well-known for her chastity, good morals and noble manners. She sent a message to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), offering her hand, through one of her lady friends. On one hand, she sought the permission of her father Khālid bin Asad, and, on the other, Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) placed the proposal before Abū Tālib and got his consent. At last, the marriage was solemnized. Every one felt happy at this alliance between the two noble families. At the time of marriage, Muḥammad (peace and blessings of

Allāh be upon him) had only attained the age of twenty-five, while Khadija was close upon forty. In spite of this disparity in age, the marriage proved a blessed one. Khadija was first wife of Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). God conferred upon her the honour of being *Umm-ul-Mu'minin*, mother of the faithful. She was so obedient that she never raised a rival even in the heart of her illustrious husband. Their marriage lasted for 26 years, but she was his sole and beloved spouse until the day of her death. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had three sons and four daughters from her. The surname of Abū al-Qāsim was granted to him due to his son Al-Qāsim. All his three sons died in infancy. His youngest daughter Fātima was married to 'Alī, the fourth Caliph. She was the mother of Imām Hasan and Imām Ḥussain, the greatest martyr of Islām.

The Reconstruction of the Ka'ba : In the year 605 A.D., the Ka'ba had been badly damaged. The Meccans thought of rebuilding the Templē of God, Ka'ba, a sacred place for worship. All the tribes took active part in this sacred work but the Black Stone (*Hajar al-Aswad*) proved to be a bone of contention amongst them. A dispute arose over this matter. Every one of them desired to have the honour of placing this holy and precious relic in position. There was not the slightest chance of their arriving at an agreement on this point. It was expected that the quarrel might assume a bloody complexion. Some of the tribes dipped their fingers in cups filled with blood, indicating thereby they

would resort to war to secure the honour. At last, an old man Abū Ummaya said, "The person who enters the gate of Ka'ba the earliest tomorrow, should act as an umpire to settle the dispute." All the tribes agreed to this proposal. Next morning the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) entered the gate first of all. All were delighted to see him because he was the right judge. He spread his mantle on the ground and placed the Black Stone on it. He, then, called upon the disputing Chiefs to share the honour of lifting up the stone to position by holding the corners of the mantle. He put the relic in its place with his own hands. His wisdom saved the Meccans from bloodshed. He had fully satisfied all the rival groups without favouring one more than the other.

The Prophethood : God had inspired Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) with the love for solitude. He devoted most of the time to meditation and religious worship that swayed his soul. There was a cave called Hira which was situated at a distance of three miles from Mecca. It was selected by Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to seek seclusion therein. He would confine himself in the cave with provisions and water. He stayed there till he had nothing left to eat. In the beginning, Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was visited by strange visions. At the age of forty, he was honoured with the Revelation of the Divine Message at night during the month of Ramaḍān. The Merciful Lord proved His generosity to His servant who attained Prophethood and was

entrusted by God with the noble office to guide the world. He saw Jibrā'il, who said, "Read." Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said, "I cannot read." The word "Read" was repeated by the angel. Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) made the same reply again. Jibrā'il spoke more emphatically: "Read." "What shall I read?" was the response this time. It was then revealed. "Read! In the name of thy Lord, Who created man from clots of blood. Read! for thy Lord is the Most Bounteous Who hath taught the use of pen. He hath taught man that which he knew not."

After this, the Divine Light which was glittering in the cave of Hira began to send out its rays to illuminate and enlighten the whole world. When the message had been delivered to him, Jibrā'il vanished. But the words remained imprinted on his heart. He left the cave and went to the hill-side. He heard a voice saying again and again: "O' Muḥammad! You are the Messenger of Allāh and I am Jibrā'il". He rushed to his house and related the whole event to his wife. She took him to her cousin, named Waraqa bin Naufal, a renowned Scholar of the Sacred Books. He listened to him and remarked, "Jibrā'il has visited you. He visited Mūsa and 'Isā as well. You are the promised one. Allāh has bestowed Prophethood upon you."

The Preaching of Islam: God imposed the onerous duty on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to preach Islam and

teach the True Faith and right conduct to the people. He said at the top of his voice, "There is One Allāh, besides Whom there is no god. Allāh is Everlasting. He begetteth not and He is not begotten. He knows things both visible and invisible. He causeth one to die and maketh one alive. Allāh is the Master of the East and the West, therefore whichever direction they turn, there is the face of God. Verily, Allāh is Omnipresent and Omniscient. Man is on trial here and he is accountable for his actions in the Hereafter. Allāh is their Lord. He is All-Powerful, but the gods whom they invoke besides Him have no power even over the husk of a date-stone."

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) began performing the duty of preaching in earnest. He devoted most of his time to the accomplishment of his mission. Khadija was Islam's first convert. 'Ali, son of Abū Tālib, was the second to profess the new religion with all his heart. He was only eleven at that time. Zaid ibn Hārith, a captive, was the third to embrace Islam in the teeth of opposition. Next, Abū Bakr accepted Islam. He was a rich merchant of Mecca. He was held in high esteem. Soon after his conversion, six notables of Mecca, including 'Uthmān, Zubair, 'Abdul Rahmān bin Auf, Talha, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, and Abū 'Ubaida bin Jarrah, followed in his footsteps and entered the fold of Islam. They were the pillars of the Muslim Ummah. They rendered valuable services to the cause of Islam. Among the women converts, the wife of 'Abbās, Asma', daughter of Abū Bakr, and Fātima, sister of 'Umar, were at the top of the

list. Gradually a large number of slaves, men and women, became Muslims. One day the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) went up the Mount Safa and called out to the Meccans. He declared, "Will you believe me if I tell you that an army is hiding on the other side of the hill?" "Yes", was the response. Then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) proclaimed, "Abjure idols. Worship Allāh, the One. Give up evil ways. Do good. Mind death and fear the judgement that you shall face after death. Believe in the Hereafter." Abū Lahab flew into a rage on hearing these views, so fantastic for him. He spoke out angrily. Some of the men merely laughed at him and the others turned a deaf ear to the preaching of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) and went their way.

The Trials of the Muslims : Those who had the spark of goodness in their hearts listened to his teachings. Their minds were enlightened with the Divine blessings. They desired to accept the message of Islam but the false family pride and tribal prestige of several leaders of the Quraish kept them away from the right path. They adopted an insulting and hostile attitude towards the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) and his faithful companions. The woeful tale of this period of sufferings and endurance makes one's hair stand on ends. There was no such calamity as did not befall the true followers of Islam. At first, the Quraish tried to bribe them but failed to gain their object. Then, they threatened them with death, but they could not

win over to their side, even a single person from the path of true and Divine belief. One day, they called on Abū Tālib with complaints and asked him to stop his nephew from preaching the new Faith which aimed at the degradation of their idols. They threatened him with dire consequences in case he did not abandon his mission. Abū Tālib was much upset. It was a matter of grave worry for Abū Tālib. He tried to advise his nephew, but he said, "O' my uncle ! If in order to make me renounce my mission, they place the Sun on my left hand and the Moon on my right hand, I swear I would never yield until I have fulfilled my task triumphantly or perish in the attempt. I am much obliged to you and should like to please you ; but even for your sake I cannot do this. If you are afraid of the anger of the people, leave me to myself. I cannot remain silent and see the people come to harm."

Abū Tālib was deeply moved and said to him affectionately, "O' son of my brother ! Go and continue your work. By God, I will never turn away from you." The Meccans asked the converts to give up their faith and on their refusal to do so, they were treated with great cruelty. Haḍrat Khubāb (Allāh be pleased with him) was thrown on a bed of fire. A tyrant placed his foot on his chest so as to force him to abandon the new Faith. The fire scorched his back. The faithful servant of God endured this cruelty with patience but did not turn his face from Islam. Haḍrat Bilāl, a slave of Ummya bin Knaḥf, was made to lie on the burning sand and

an enormous stone was placed on his chest, so that he could not move, but the loyal Mu'adhdhin lifted the forefinger of his right hand and said again and again, "*Ahad ! Ahad ! Allāh is One.*" 'Ammar (Allāh be pleased with him) was made to wear an iron coat. He was exposed to the blazing rays of the sun. His flesh crackled with the molten metal. The uncle of 'Uthmān wrapped him in a mat of palm and blew smoke into his nose but could not banish Islam from his heart. Musaib bin'Umair (Allāh be pleased with him) was turned out of his house because he had embraced Islam. The legs of a slave were tied to two camels. The camels were driven into the opposite directions and the poor fellow was thus torn into pieces. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was also teased and insulted by the idolaters. Dirt was thrown at his door to annoy him. Stones were flung at him off and on. Thorns were placed on his way, so that he might get hurt while going to the mosque in the early hours of the morning. Abū Jahl directed one of his friends to place the entrails of a slaughtered camel on the Prophet's back when he was engaged in prayers. Once 'Aqaba dragged the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) rudely, but the latter tolerated all these hardships with a smiling countenance. When the Quraish realized that their excesses and cruelties could not suppress the faithful Muslims, they decided to boycott the family of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). They stopped selling even foodstuffs to the Muslims. One day, they hatched a plot to kill the

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), but he was saved by his dear friend Haḍrat Abū Bakr Siddiq (Allāh be pleased with him). In spite of all these shameless cruelties, the followers of Islam demonstrated such love and devotion of God and His Messenger as heaven should never have witnessed before. The flower of Islam continued giving out sweet smell and fragrance.

The Journey to Abyssinia : The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had a look at this grave situation. Nothing escaped his eyes but he continued work wholeheartedly. He was not the man to give in. When he saw that the people of Mecca were becoming more and more cruel day by day, he advised some of his companions to go to a place of safety. They complied with his orders and migrated to Abyssinia in two batches. They thought that they would be able to live in peace under the reign of the Negus, a Christian but just King. The cruel enemies did not like to spare them. They even followed them in their exile. They greazed the palms of the priests and instigated them against the emigrants. One day, these Muslims were summoned to the Court of the Negus in connection with the hearing of certain complaints lodged against them. The King put many questions to them about the new religion. Ja'far (Allāh be pleased with him) advocated the case of the Muslim on their behalf. He put forth his case so plainly that the Negus was greatly impressed. He delivered this impressive speech : "O' King ! Our religion is Islam. We were wrapped in ignorance. God raised amongst us a brother whose

pure life and nobility of blood was acknowledged by his friends and enemies alike. He taught us to give up idolworship and to be kind and affectionate towards the widows and the orphans. He asked us to desist from being unjust. He forbade us to trouble others. He advised us to believe in the oneness of God. He asked us not to bow our heads to any one except God. He instructed us to offer prayers, to keep fasts and to pay the poor-due (*Zakat*). We cured ourselves of the evils. We accepted the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) as our leader. This made our own people our bitter enemies. They turned against us. They wished that we should fall into the same dark pit from which we had emerged out. We underwent a lot of inconvenience and torture at the hands of the idolaters."

The Negus was greatly moved. The tears welled up in his eyes on hearing of the sufferings of the converts. He sympathized with the Muslims and provided them with more facilities. The Meccans were much ashamed because they did not succeed in their mission. They became more cruel. By the Grace of God, however, Islam got another champion 'Umar (Allāh be pleased with him).

The Conversion of 'Umar : The conversion of 'Umar (Allāh be pleased with him) is one of the Divine Grace. It strengthened the stronghold of Islam. One day, 'Umar, son of al-Khaṭṭāb, had buckled on his sword. He bent his steps towards the house of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to put an end to his life. On

a grievous loss to the Prophet. He (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) bore it with patience.

His Mission to Tā'if: The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) resolved to preach Islam outside Mecca. He made a journey to Tā'if which was the second biggest place in Hejāz next to Mecca. The people of Tā'if were influential. They refused to accept the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). Some mischievous people induced the hooligans to tease him when he was on his way back. He was so severely pelted with stones that the blood trickled down his forehead to the feet. Staggering, falling, rising and dragging himself in the midst of a sneering crowd, Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) took refuge in a groove. While he was relating the woeful tale of this journey, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), said, "The Angel came to me and sought my permission to crush the tyrants." I said, "No ! No ! I hope God will raise from amongst them men who will worship Him alone." He prayed that God might shower flowers upon those who had thrown stones at him in Tā'if. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) did not curse them. So sweet was his disposition and so sympathetic was his attitude towards mankind !

Mi'raj : When there was darkness and despair all around, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had the luminous experience of *Mi'raj*, the Ascension. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was to be raised to the heights of

the way, he got wind that Fātima, his sister, along with her husband, had entered the fold of Islam. When he got near to their dwelling, he overheard the recitation from the Holy Qur'ān. He grew furious and knocked at the door violently. Fātima hid the parchment under her attires. The door was, however, opened. No sooner did 'Umar step in than he fell upon his brother-in-law. He knocked him down on the ground and beat him mercilessly. Fātima made desperate efforts to rescue her husband. She said, "Enemy of Allāh: why do you strike those who believe in One God? Come what may, we will follow the true faith." On hearing this, 'Umar lost his wits and with a brutal blow he dashed her to the ground. Soon after that act, 'Umar felt much ashamed due to his inhuman behaviour. He repented on what he had done. God made him realise his blunder because He wanted to show him the right path. Haḍrat 'Umar said, "Show me the writing." Fātima asked him to perform ablution before its recitation by hīm. He acted upon her suggestion. Then his sister handed over the writing to 'Umar. As he read *Sura Ta-ha*, he was greatly moved. He proceeded towards the house of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). He kissed the Prophet's hands and embraced Islam. 'Umar (Allāh be pleased with him) encouraged the Muslims to offer prayers in public.

Death of Abu Talib and Khadija : A few years later, both Abū Tālib, the Holy Prophet's kind uncle, and Khadija, his beloved wife, passed away. It was

glory. Truth was to triumph and falsehood was bound to vanish.

Second Marriage of the Holy Prophet : Towards the end of the year, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (Allāh be pleased with him) and his wife returned from Abyssinia, accompanied by a few emigrants. One of them called Sukran died on his arrival. The Holy Prophet married his widow, Sauda, in order to reward the zeal of one of the female converts to Islam. She had boldly borne a lot of trouble for glorifying the noble cause of Islam.

The Two Oaths of 'Aqaba : It was the eleventh year after the call and it marked the time of the Pilgrimage (*Hajj*). The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) carried on his preaching of the True Faith to the various groups of the pilgrims. He happened to come across a small group of six pilgrims who hailed from Medina. He preached Islam to them. They listened to him with keen interest. Their minds were illuminated by Divine Light and thus they accepted Islam. They promised to come again the following year. The next year they came to perform *Hajj* with a group of seven leading men of Aus and Khazraj, two chief Arab tribes of Medina, then known as Yathrib. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) preached to them. They were deeply impressed. They embraced Islam and took the oath of loyalty. They promised to abide by their oath, regardless of the adverse odds. This was the first pledge of 'Aqaba :

“We will ascribe no partners unto Allāh. We will

neither steal nor commit adultery. We will never tell a lie to defame others. We will obey the Prophet."

The following year, on the occasion of *Hajj*, a deputation consisting of seventy-five persons from Medina called on the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) near 'Aqaba. The deputation invited the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to settle in Medina. 'Abbās, the uncle of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was also present there. He said to them, "You must bear in mind that the Quraish are the sworn enemies of my nephew (Muḥammad). If he settles down in your city, the whole of Arabia will turn against you. If you are prepared to face the consequences, take him with you. If not, give up the idea and let him stay here. We will protect him at all costs", they said. "We are fully aware of the dangers ahead, but we are firm in our faith. We will stand by him through thick and thin. We will never betray him." In the light of this pledge, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) promised to accede to their request if they would defend him as well as Islam. All of them swore to be loyal to him till the last moment of their lives. This is known as the Second Pledge of 'Aqaba. After this the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) allowed the Muslims to migrate to Medina at proper intervals.

The Plot against the Life of the Prophet : One day, the Quraish called a meeting in the *Dar-un-*

Nadwah (House of Council), built by their ancestors. The meeting was attended by the chiefs of various tribes to ponder over the critical situation created by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). They plotted to make him prisoner or to drive him out in order to stop his activities. Many suggestions were put forth but they unanimously agreed to the proposal made by Abū Jahl. He said, "From each sub-division of our tribes we will choose a young and vigorous warrior belonging to a family equally noble and respected. We will place a sword in his hand. These warriors shall put him to death unitedly at the same instant. By acting in this way, the responsibility of shedding his blood, will be shared by all the sub-divisions to which the assassins may belong. The relatives of the deceased, being unable to declare war upon every sub-division of our tribes, will be obliged to content themselves with receiving the blood ransom that we may be able to pay." As they were busy with the work of putting this nefarious plan into practice, God guided His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to safety and security.

Migration from Mecca to Medina : When the Muslims were hard pressed in Mecca and there was no way out, Allāh revealed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) the course to be taken to by him. Accordingly, he asked 'Ali (Allāh be pleased with him) to lie on his bed, wrapped up in his mantle. Reciting the Holy Qur'ān, he bade farewell to his house and slipped through his enemies

unobserved. He went straight to the house of Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him), his dear friend. They left the city together and took shelter in the cave of Thaur. Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) entered the cave first. He swept and smoothed the place and then requested the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to get in. They lay hidden in the cave for three days. Under cover of darkness they were provided with milk and food by the slave of Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him). At day break, those who had been keeping a close watch during the night, were full of rage on finding that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had escaped and his bed was occupied by 'Alī (Allāh be pleased with him). They captured 'Alī (Allāh be pleased with him) and imprisoned him. But soon after, they decided to spare him. The Meccans sent pursuers after the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) in all directions. They declared a reward of hundred camels for the sacred head of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). After their departure, Abū Jahl was greatly infuriated at the successful migration of the Muslims. He came to Asma', daughter of Abu Bakr, and asked her to tell him where her father was. When the girl replied that she did not know his whereabouts, the wretched fellow slapped her on the face. On the way, Suraqa, a gallant Meccan soldier, overtook them. Whenever he drew near, his horse would stumble and fall. He was overawed and he offered an apology. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) forgave him. The rest of the journey to Medina was

safe. Meanwhile, the Muslims in Medina had received the news of the departure of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) from Mecca. They began to make preparations to accord him a warm welcome. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) alighted at a suburb of city, called Quba', which was situated at a distance of three miles from Medina. He was invited to stay there to take rest. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) accepted the offer and stayed there for a few days. During his short stay at the place, he built a mosque there. At Quba', 'Ali (Allāh be pleased with him) joined his companions. He had travelled on foot. Before he left Mecca 'Ali (Allāh be pleased with him) had returned to the owners their articles that had been entrusted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) by the Meccans. How strange it is that the Quraish, who were the Prophet's enemies because he talked of the Creator and gave them His message, deposited their valuables with him because they thought him *al-Amin*, the trustworthy.

Arrival of the Holy Prophet at Medina : The Medinites had been looking forward anxiously to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). The hour of the prayers arrived, when they were passing through the territory of Banū Salim ibn 'Auf. He alighted and for the first time offered the *Jum'a* Prayers, leading a vast congregation of Believers. At the termination of the *Jum'a* Prayers, he addressed the Faithful. Some of the inhabitants

sang in chorus :

The full Moon hath risen above our heads, emerging from the *Sanniyat-al-Wida*. Numerous are the thanks givings we must offer to Allāh—O' thou, His Messenger among us—the orders thou dost bring shall be piously executed.

The Medinites were highly delighted and they extended a cordial welcome to the emigrants, most of whom had nothing to live upon. At many places, a deputation of leading men caught his camel by the bridle and stopped it. They requested the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to stay with him. But he replied, "Let my she-camel move on, for she had received orders from the Most High." And with a smiling face, he further remarked, "The blessings of Allāh be upon you!" He let the reins hang loose on the neck of the camel. At last, she stopped at the spot that belonged to two orphans of Banū Najjar, the clan to which belonged the mother of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). The nearest house was that of Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī (Allāh be pleased with him) who extended hospitality to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him).

The Prophet's Mosque : The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) stayed at the house of Haḍrat Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī for a period of seven months. Then he acquired a suitable plot and the foundations of a mosque, the first in Iṣlām, were laid in Medina. He allowed his companions to build

their dwellings around it. Haḍrat Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) also built a house with one of its doors opening into the courtyard of the Mosque. These houses had mud walls. Their roofs were of palm wood and were so low that a man could touch them with the hand.

Life in Medina : On the arrival at Medina, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) promoted brotherhood between the Meccan emigrants and the *Anṣār*s, the helpers of Medina. The *Anṣār* offered all possible facilities to their brethren-in-faith. Soon they began to live as brothers, and their mutual relations were as affectionate as those of real brothers. Islam gave birth to the sentiments even stronger than the bonds of family and blood. The emigrants thought that it was against the human dignity and the sense of justice to overburden the *Anṣār*. Such was the depth of love and affection between them that they were ready to share whatever they inherited. One of the *Anṣār* is said to have taken his emigrant brother to his house. He showed him all that he possessed and said, "You may have half of this property. I shall divorce one of my two wives, so that you may marry her." "No" replied the emigrant. "You must keep all your property and wives with you. I do not stand in need of them." Many other examples can be cited in this respect to show that the *Anṣār* were pleased to place their entire property at the disposal of the emigrants.

The Era of Hijra : The Holy Prophet's journey ended on Monday, the twelfth day of *Rabi'-ul-Awwal*. The year of this emigration, universally known as *Hijra*, has been adopted by the Muslims for the beginning of their era. It corresponds to 622 A.D.

Revelation Regarding Jihad : The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was no longer a mere preacher. He had the honour to act as the Head of the State of Medina which became the first centre of Islam. He felt it was necessary to take up arms for the triumph of the faith which could not be assured until the conquest of Mecca where stood the sacred House of Allāh. At that time he received this Revelation :

“And fight for the cause of Allāh against those who fight against you, but commit not the injustice of attacking them first. Verily, Allāh does not love the unjust. And kill them wherever you find them and eject them from which place they have ejected you ”

The Battle of Badr : The infidels of Mecca could not tolerate the sight of the Muslims living in peace and contentment. They made a secret pact with the Jews of Medina. Having secured the Jewish support, they began to threaten the Muslims. They did all that lay in their power to cause hardships to the Believers, but they did not yield. First of all, they sent out parties to harass them but later on they decided to use force in order to crush the new movement in Medina. They wanted only a pretext

to invade Medina. Once a Meccan caravan comprising one thousand camels with precious articles was returning from Syria with Abū Sufyān at the head. The caravan got a false alarm that the Muslims would attack them. Abū Sufyān sent a message to Mecca for help in that hour of need. Abū Jahl wished to take advantage of this opportunity to invade Medina. Abū Sufyān followed a safer route and informed the Meccans that he no longer stood in need of their aid. But Abū Jahl, who was bent on making mischief, said, "Let us proceed on to Badr. We will encamp there for three days and nights, passing the time in amusement. We will eat meat and drink wine to our hearts' content. On hearing of our expedition, the Muslims will tremble with fear."

The idolaters approved of his plan and mobilised a large army under the command of the best chiefs in order to launch a campaign against the Muslims of Medina. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) got the terms of this development. He set out from Medina at the head of 313 followers of whom 236 were from the *Anṣār* (Helpers) and 77 from the emigrants. He allowed the Helpers to withdraw if they so desired, as the pact with them was intended to defend Medina rather than fight in the battlefield. But no one deserted him. This small band of the soldiers of Allāh was poorly equipped. They reached the *Wadi* and took up their positions. They erected a shelter for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). There was acute shortage of water in those days. The soldiers suffered

terribly because of thirst. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) prayed for rain and Allāh poured forth beneficial showers to drench His faithful servants. The believers were able to quench their thirst, wash their clothes and perform their ablutions. For the idolaters, however, the storm was terribly disastrous. The ground where they had camped became muddy and slippery. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had a look at about one thousand well-equipped fighters of whom at least one hundred were horsemen. They were advancing proudly. At that time, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) prayed to Allāh :

“O’ Lord ! I beseech Thee to fulfil Thy promise of help. O’ Lord ! If Thou shalt allow this small band of the Muslims to perish, Thou shalt never be worshipped on the earth.”

It is said that his prayer to Allāh met with acceptance. The Qur’ān refers to this incident in the following verse :

“When you sought aid from your Lord. He answered you : I will assist you with a thousand of the angels following one another.”

At last, the time grew ripe when the fate of Islam was to be decided. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) led the attack in person. He entrusted the charge of the right wing to Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) and that of the left wing to ‘Ali (Allāh be pleased with him). The battle commenced

on the seventeenth day of the month of Ramaḍān. Soon after the beginning of the battle, 'Ali, Hamza and Ubaida (Allāh be pleased with them) performed many a heroic deeds. They slew most of the enemies of God. The idolaters lost their courage and a tiny group of the faithful Muslims inflicted a crushing defeat on those who were three times as large as their own number. Abū Jahl was killed by a teen-ager. The Meccans took to their heels, leaving behind seventy dead bodies in the battlefield. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) adopted the most humane attitude towards the prisoners. He was kind to them. Some of them were set free without a ransom on account of their poverty. The victorious Muslims also came by a large booty.

The Battle of Uhud : The Meccans longed to avenge their defeat at Badr. Their future seemed darker to them. Their caravans dared not venture on the road leading to Syria. Ruin and famine were inevitable at an early date. They decided to invade Medina with an army of three thousand infidels to save themselves from the clutches of the threatening disaster. They were resolved to destroy the Muslims once for all. Abū Sufyān, 'Ikrima and Khālīd bin Walīd were at the head of their troops. The women's thirst for revenge was equally intense. The wife of Abū Sufyān, Hind, also accompanied them with a group of her lady companions. They sang war songs to encourage the soldiers. The troops of the infidels marched to Medina and encamped not far from the city at the foot of the hill called Uhud. The

faithful found themselves in a state of confusion. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) wanted to stay in Medina and defend the country. But some of the zealous persons insisted on fighting in the open field. The Muslim army numbered a thousand foot-soldiers but possessed only two horses. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was leading them to the battlefield of Uhud, he came across 'Abdullāh bin Ubayy who was a hypocrite and had accepted Islam without having faith in it. He created a rift among the Muslims. Consequently, one-third of the entire force deserted the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), and he was left with only 700 followers to face the invaders. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) arranged his forces for fighting. They had the mountain behind them. There was vulnerable passage in the rear. He posted fifty skilful archers to guard the rear of his men. They had been instructed to repulse the enemy with showers of arrows and, to stand firmly stationed at their post, whatever the fate of the battle might be. The battle commenced. The Muslims fought tooth and nail with the hostile force. Their successive attacks broke the lines of the enemy and scattered their forces. The infidels' lost hearts and turned on their backs to run away. Their flag fell to the ground, close to heap of the dead bodies. In the meantime, some of the Muslim archers abandoned their positions in order to plunder the camps of the fugitives. They ignored the Prophet's orders. Thus the rear of the Muslim army was left unguarded. Khālid, the

valiant General of the infidel army, perceived the fault of the archers. He availed himself of the golden chance and attacked the Muslims in the rear. The fleeing Meccans also turned back. The tide of the combat turned against the Muslims. They suffered heavy losses. Many noble soldiers of Islam fell martyrs in the fight. The Meccans showered arrows and stones on a small group of the faithful surrounding the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). One of the stones thus thrown by the son of Abū Waqqāṣ, struck the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). One of his teeth was broken and he was seriously wounded. The situation became more critical when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was knocked down and the rumour of his death spread like a wild fire in the battlefield. The Muslims were bereft of all courage on hearing this bad news. Soon after, however, someone recognized him and shouted with joy that he was yet alive. His devoted followers removed him to a safe place. Here an attempt was made by Khālīd bin Walīd to make a charge with his horsemen at this small group. Haḍrat ‘Umar (Allāh be pleased was him) repulsed them and they were forced to flee. Abū Sufyān and the other infidels were exhausted. They went back and threatened to come again and fight. The Muslim women including the Prophet’s own daughter nursed the wounded. Seventy Muslims lay dead on the battlefield. These martyrs were buried patiently. Hind tried to eat up the liver of Hamza, the Holy Prophet’s uncle. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him)

was deeply shocked to see all this barbarity. The Holy Qur'ān refers to this incident in the following Verse :

“And how many a Prophet hath combated with an enemy on whose side were many myriads? Yet they were not daunted by what befell them on the path of Allāh, nor were they weakened, nor did they meekly submit. And Allāh loveth those who endure with stead-fastness.”

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) observed the midday prayer. All the Muslims prayed with him and offered thanks to the Almighty for having saved them despite their negligence in the performance of their duty. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was seriously injured, some of his companions suggested to him to invoke the wrath of God and curse his enemies. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) asserted : “I have not come to curse and avenge. I am here to invite mankind to the right path.” Then he raised his hands in prayer and said. “O’ God ! Forgive my people. Show them the right path because they know not what they do.”

The Exile of Banu Nadir : The losses suffered by the Muslims at Uhud had encouraged the hypocrites, and the Jews began to hatch more plots against the Muslims. The hypocrites promised to fight with the Jews side by side. Once the Jews of Banū Nadir conspired to assassinate the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). Some decisive

action against the tribe was deemed necessary. The Muslims marched against the Banū Nadir. They took refuge in their strong towers. They gave in after a siege lasting for fourteen days. At last, they were allowed to leave Medina with all their bag and baggage.

The Battle of Trench : A deputation comprising the representatives of the prosperous colonies of the Jews journeyed to Mecca to conclude an alliance with the Quraish against the Muslims. The infidels made another effort to destroy the Muslims with the help of their allies. An army of ten thousand veteran soldiers marched against Medina. When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) became aware of their designs, he decided to face them. A learned Persian, Salmān by name, recently converted, explained to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) a system of effective defence. This was by means of a trench. Salmān had seen it practised in his own country. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was so much impressed by the arguments of Salmān that a trench was ordered to be dug at once. All the Believers dug the trench and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) himself took an active part in completing this work. The invaders were proud of their strength but they found the trench to be the most serious obstacle in their way. One of the riders, Naufil ibn 'Abdullāh, tried to jump across the trench. He rolled with his horse down into the trench where he was stoned to death. The trench checked the terrible advance of the enemy.

During full one month of siege the defenders remained firm with remarkable courage. Meanwhile, the Banū Quraiza had turned traitors. They had been incited by the chief of the Banū Nadir to rise against the Muslims. Some of them advanced towards the stronghold that had sheltered the Muslim women and children. Safia slew the traitor. The Jews were alarmed and were forced to flee. A person managed to sow the seeds of distrust between the Jews and the Meccan pagans. God helped the faithful. Suddenly a violent wind began to blow. The wind storm overtook the invaders and they suffered a great loss. Abū Sufyān retreated with his supporters during the night because of their most miserable state. Thus, a serious danger had been averted from Medina. The Holy Qur'ān refers to this incident in the following Verses :

"But they were not left defenceless : Verily their sole wish was to abscond. If the enemy had affected entry at all points and they had been asked to promote rebellion among the Believers, they would certainly have done so ; but only for a short time would they have remained in."

The Treaty of Hudaibiya : One day, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had the vision that he had entered Mecca in security. In the month of Dhil Qa'da, he proceeded to Mecca at the head of fourteen hundred pilgrims. He took seventy camels with him for the ritual sacrifice. He garlanded the sacrificial animals to show that his intention was peaceful. Moreover, he wore *ihram*. When he

arrived at the foot of the hill called Hudaibiya, his she-camel knelt and would not get up. His Companions said, "Is she restive?" The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) replied, "She is not restive. She has been stopped by Him Who formerly stopped the elephant of Abrah and prevented him from entering Mecca." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) issued orders for pitching tents. The Quraish deputed 'Urwa bin Mas'ud, Budail and Ibn 'Alqama, to conduct negotiations but their mission failed. All of them held the unanimous opinion that the Muslims had no intention to wage war against their fellow countrymen. At last, Haḍrat 'Uthmān was sent to Abū Sufyān and the other noble men of Mecca to explain the Muslims' objective. The Meccans said, "O 'Uthmān! If you desire to perform the ritual circuits (*Tawāf*), we allow you to do so." He replied, "I will never accomplish this work unless I follow in the footsteps of Allāh's Messenger." This reply infuriated the Quraish and they made him prisoner. The rumour spread quickly that Haḍrat 'Uthmān (Allāh be pleased with him) had been murdered. On hearing this, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) declared firmly that they would not retreat without avenging the murder of 'Uthmān (Allāh be pleased with him). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) stood under the shade of a tree and his followers came to him one after another. They touched his hand and took the pledge to fight to the last. This event is known as *Bai'at ar-Riḍwān* in the history of

Islam. Later on, the news regarding the murder of 'Uthmān (Allāh be pleased with him) turned out to be false. Sohail ibn 'Amr appeared with the flag of truce and offered the following conditions:

1. This year the Muslims should turn back without visiting the Ka'ba.
2. They would be permitted to perform pilgrimage next year provided they were unarmed.
3. Fugitives from the Meccans to Medina were to be returned but not the fugitives from the Muslims to Mecca.
4. The truce was to be in force for ten years.

After a lengthy discussion, both the parties came to an agreement and prepared the draft of the treaty. The treaty was signed by the leading Believers and the Idolaters. The terms of the treaty appeared to be favourable to the Meccans, but it turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the Muslims. It is called the signal of victory. Now, both the parties could intermingle freely with the result that more and more people entered the fold of Islam.

The Campaign against Khaibar: Khaibar was a fortified place. It was a stronghold of the Jews. They planned to make a surprise attack on the Muslims. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) got wind of their evil designs. He advanced towards Khaibar with the soldiers of Allāh. They pitched their camps near the place. The fight that ensued was very terrible. First of all, Haḍrat Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) was

commissioned to lead the attack against the strongest fort but he failed to capture it. On the following day, Haḍrat 'Umar (Allāh be pleased with him) led the expedition but with no better results. Last of all, the command was assigned to Haḍrat 'Ali (Allāh be pleased with him). He played a splended and bold part in the campaign. He performed many heroic deeds and eventually captured the fort. The Jews of Khaibar and Fadak laid down their arms. They were obliged to live on their estates as the clients of the Mnslims. They supplicated to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to allow them to take half of the crops as the remuneration for their labour. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) consented. As Khaibar was an extremely fertile land, the spoils obtained were considerable.

The Prophet Sends Envoys to the Monarchs: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) then turned to the neighbouring States. He sent his envoys, inviting heads of those States to embrace Islam for Allāh's message was not destined to be confined only to the land of the Arabs. On receiving the Prophet's invitation, Al-Mundhir accepted Islam. The Viceroy of Egypt sent rich presents to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) while Herqal and the Negus replied in a courteous manner.

Kisra, the Emperor of Persia, swore that he would punish the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) for this audacity. But Allāh

immediately took him to task. The arrogant monarch was murdered by his own son, Al-Hārith, son of Abū Shamar, who was fated to see his kingdom torn asunder, as he had torn the letter delivered to him by the Prophet's envoy.

The Battle of Mauta : A messenger, bearing the invitation of Islam, was sent to the Ghassanid prince. The messenger was brutally murdered against all decorum and courtesy. Three thousand faithful warriors of Islam advanced towards Syria to avenge this murder. The Byzantine Emperor and his underlings mustered an army of 100,000 soldiers to face the Muslims. Nothing daunted the Muslims. At first, Zaid bin Hārith commanded the army of Islam. He fought fiercely but died from spear wounds. Then the command was assumed by Haḍrat Ja'far, brother of Haḍrat 'Ali. He was seriously wounded. Ninety injuries inflicted with swords and spears were counted on his body. No wound was witnessed on his back. He was a martyr of Islam. At last, Khalid bin Walid became the commander. He was so brave and daring that nine swords were broken in his hand while he was fighting. At last, the forces of the enemy fled away and the Muslims carried the day.

The Conquest of Mecca : The Quraish did not respect the terms of peace. They violated the conditions of the Treaty of Hudaibiya. In spite of the undertaking they had given, they helped their allies, the Banū Bakr, in their attack on the Khuza'a tribe which was on friendly terms with the Muslims.

In vain did the Khuza'a seek shelter in the vicinity of the Ka'ba where a large number of innocent men of the tribe were massacred. At last, they were compelled to seek the help of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). When he listened to the heart-rending woeful tale of the people of the tribe of Khuza'a, he decided to teach the defaulters a lesson for this treachery. On the 10th of Ramaḍān, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) decided to leave for Mecca with 10,000 followers. As the Meccans knew that their crime would not go unpunished, they sent Abū Sufyān to Medina to tender an apology on their behalf and patch up their differences. First of all, Abū Sufyān went to the house of Umm Habiba, his daughter and wife of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). When Abū Sufyān sat on the bed, Umm Habiba (Allāh be pleased with her) asked him to vacate. He folded it and placed it aside. Abū Sufyān said to her in an offended tone, "Is your father unworthy of this carpet"? She replied, "This carpet belongs to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). As you are an infidel, you are not allowed to sit on it because of your impurity." On hearing this remark, Abū Sufyān was much disappointed. So he left her house. Then he made desperate attempts at pacification, but in vain. At last, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) advanced to Mecca. They pitched up their tents. The lights kindled by the brave sons of Islam at night illuminated the miles around Mecca. Abū Sufyān through the good offices of 'Abbās offered to pay homage to the Holy

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). He was received with open arms. He laid down his arms because he was unable to face the fighters of Islam. Abū Sufyān embraced Islam and the Prophet's generous forgiveness washed away all his misdeeds. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) appointed captains for directing the entry into Mecca. Zubair was to join by Kuda Road, Khalid was to enter the city through the outlying western districts and Sa'd ibn 'Ubaida by the Pass of al-Kada. The captains were instructed not to fight except in defence. The entry into the city of Mecca was bloodless. There was, however, a slight clash with the troops of Ḥaḍrat Khālīd bin Walīd. They were attacked by 'Ikrama son of Abū Jahl. 'Ikrama was pardoned for his misdeeds. He entered the fold of Islam and rendered valuable services to glorify Islam. The victorious Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) also marched into the city of Mecca. He was the picture of modesty and gratitude to Allāh. Mecca was resounding with the name of the Almighty. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was reciting again and again :

"Truth hath come and falsehood hath vanished away. Lo! falsehood is ever bound to vanish."

First of all, the sacred House of Allāh, the Ka'ba was purged of the idols.

The Sermon after the Conquest of Mecca: A large number of the inhabitants of Mecca wended their way towards the Hill of Safa where the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had called them. The Meccans were subdued and now

they were ashamed of their past misbehaviour and misconduct. They recalled the cruelties and indescribable excesses which they had perpetrated on the Muslims. They were speechless. They trembled with fear because they were at the mercy of the conquerors. Vengeance against them was anticipated, but the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) granted general amnesty to all. He treated his former enemies with unprecedented gentleness. He issued orders that one staying behind the closed doors must not be molested and all those who took refuge in the house of Abū Sufyān were declared safe. This policy of tolerance of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) has no parallel in history. When a large number of people had gathered, he addressed them:

“There is but One God and He shares His Divinity with none. His promise has proved true. He has sent his help to his faithful servants. He has undone the schemes of His opponents. O’ Meccans! Listen to me. All claims as well as the pride in blood and wealth are under my feet. O’ Quraish! God has rooted out the false pride in ignorance and family. All of us are the sons of Adam and Adam was created out of clay.”

Having announced the unique principles of the Oneness of God, forgiveness and equality, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) posed a question: “What do you expect of me?” Kindness and pity, gracious brother and son of a noble father!” was the voice of their heart.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said, "Have no fear this day. May Allāh forgive you ! He is Most Merciful to those who show mercy." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) forgave them all and thus conquered the hearts of the Meccans. Such a unique example of pardon and benediction cannot be found in the annals of mankind. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was sent to seek vengeance from the cruel. He came to bless the world with his unlimited mercy and benevolence.

Ghazwa of Hunain: After the conquest of Mecca, all the neighbouring tribes came to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to offer their allegiance to him, but the tribes known as Hawazin and Thaqif refused to bow down. Mālik bin 'Auf, the chief of the Hawazin tribe, collected his own tribesmen and those of Thaqif who were in alliance with them. They resolved to strike a last blow at Islam. The Hawazin and the Thaqif relied on the solidity of the rampart surrounding Tā'if. They hoped to take refuge there in case of fighting. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) came to know of these developments, he deputed 'Abdullāh to go there and report to him the true state of affairs. He brought back the news that the Hawazin and the other tribes were bent upon war. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had, therefore, no alternative but to march against them at the head of 12000 soldiers of Islam. On the other side, the enemy tribes were in great

earnest. The two armies met in the Valley of Hunain. The battle commenced with an attack by the tribesmen who were firm in their determination. The enemy's archers showered arrows on the Muslims and their ranks were soon dispersed. They fled in all directions, leaving the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) almost unattended. He firmly stood his ground even at this critical moment. Some of his devoted and distinguished companions, however, protected him. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) asked 'Abbās to call out loudly, "O' *Ansār*! Ye men of the pledge of the tree!" This had a magic effect. The dispersed Muslims returned to their Master and the entire battlefield began to resound with the words, "Here we are!" "The Muslims soldiers lashed their camels and pulled their bridles. With big strides the frightened animals kept on their flight. The warriors of Allāh jumped down from their backs and rushed to the spot with drawn swords in their hands. After their strength had increased, they received orders to make a charge. They fought bravely and bitterly. They put the enemy to rout and won the battle. It is said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) took a handful of dust and threw it towards the enemy. It seemed as if they had been blinded by the dust, and the enemy soldiers were consequently dispersed. The Holy Qur'ān refers to this incident in the following Verses:

"Now Allāh hath helped you in many battles.
On the day of Hunain ye prided yourselves with

your numbers but it availed you naught; and the earth, with all its breadth, became straitened for you: Then you turned your backs in flight. Then did Allāh send down a spirit of tranquility upon His Apostle and upon the Faithful and sent down hosts which he saw not and punished the infidels."

One of the detachments of the enemy, namely, the Thaqif, took refuge in Tā'if. The rest fled to a fortified camp in the valley of Autus. The valley was easily captured by the Muslims. The families of the Hawazin clan, along with all their possessions including a herd of cattle, fell into the hands of the Muslims. Then, Tā'if was besieged for a few days. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) prayed, "O' my Lord! Make Thaqif see the light of the Faith and bring them to me." The prayer was granted, and before long the Thaqif entered the fold of Islam. Soon after a deputation of the Hawazin waited upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) and made an appeal for the release of their prisoners. He set them free and distributed the booty among the soldiers of God.

The Expedition of Tabuk: False rumours that the Byzantine Emperor was mustering a strong army to conquer Arabia and crush the warriors of Islam spread like a wild fire. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) started his preparations for defence. This time the Muslims had to face a mighty empire and their own country was in the grip of a famine. A long drought had withered

the crops and the scorching heat of the sun had undermined all energy. The date harvest was almost ready and the Medinites were reluctant to leave the city as this harvest was the only source of their income. The hypocrites took full advantage of these circumstances and tried to mislead the people. In spite of all these disadvantages, no obstacle could stand in the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). He addressed an appeal to the Believers to extend their co-operation in the expedition. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) placed the whole of his fortune at the disposal of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). Ḥaḍrat 'Uthman (Allāh be pleased with him) furnished ten thousand warriors with provisions and weapons. Some of the believing women offered their precious jewellery. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) led the expedition at the head of 30,000 Muslim soldiers. He along with the soldiers, bore a lot of inconvenience during the march. When they reached Tabūk, he came to know there was no danger of an invasion of Arabia by the Byzantines. At Tabūk, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) received the eager allegiance of the Arab Lords who hurried to him from far and near. Alone, the proud Prince of Dawmatul Jandal, an important town, refused submission. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) sent Khālīd bin Walīd (Allāh be pleased with him) to him. He was soon brought to his knees. After twenty days, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) returned

to Medina in safety.

The Last Pilgrimage: In the tenth A.H., the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) undertook the farewell pilgrimage to Mecca. He set the model for Hajj. At Dhul Hulaifa all his followers put on *Ihrām* like him. After three ablutions, he kissed the *Hajar-al-Aswad* (Black Stone). He, then, performed the ceremonial *Tawāf*—ritual circumambulation. On the eighth day of *Dhul-Hijja*, he went to the Valley of Mina where he caused a tent of woolen stuff to be pitched. There he offered prayers. Next day, after the morning prayers, he bestrode his she-camel to get to the mountain of 'Arafa. There were countless people with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). After Allāh had been glorified by the *Takbir*, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) exhorted his followers to treat their wives gently and never to forget that the rights of the spouses were equal to their duties. He forbade taking interest on money. He declared that the murder committed during the "Days of Ignorance" would not be avenged. He asserted, "O Believers! Your blood and your belongings ought to be looked upon as sacred to every one of you as this day is holy and this land is holy. Remember what I say, because I know not if ever I shall be with you again on this spot when this day is past." Then he posed a question, "Have I fulfilled my mission?" "Yes, indeed!" replied the pilgrims unanimously. "O Allāh! Harken to their testimony," said the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him).

It was near the summit of 'Arafa that Divine Revelation suddenly came down to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him):

"This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favours unto you, and have chosen Al-Islam as the religion for you."

On hearing this Revelation, Haḍrat Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him), far from participating in the general joy, was seized with a fit of intense melancholy. His eyes were filled with tears. Then, they all made their way to the Valley of Mina in order to throw seven stones at the three pillars each of rude masonry called Jumurat. This is done in commemoration of the pebbles thrown by Prophet Ibrāhim (peace be upon him) to drive away the devil who tried thrice to stop him at that spot. After that, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) freed 63 slaves and sacrificed camels. The meat was distributed among the pilgrims. He, then, got his hair cut and drank the *Zamzam* water. He set out again along the road to Meḍina. This pilgrimage serves as the ideal pattern for the pilgrims who come from far and near in order to perform this sacred duty imposed on all wealthy Muslims.

The Year of Deputations: In this year, a number of deputations waited upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to pay homage to him or to make peace with the Muslims. The citizens lodged the visitors and entertained them. They were presented with suitable gift as a mark of love. A christian deputation was accommodated in the

Prophet's Mosque. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had always a tender regard for the sentiments of others. It was the glorious period of the general acceptance of God's Message when vast multitudes of people embraced Islam.

Illness and Demise of the Holy Prophet: One midnight, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) went to the graveyard of Baqi' where lay buried the remains of some of his relatives. It is recorded on the authority of his slave Abū Muwaihaba that he accompanied the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). On entering the graveyard, he said, "O sleepers of the graves! The condition in which you are is far better than that in which the living are. Calamities are coming forth like portions of a dark night: the latter calamity devours the previous one and is worse than that." Then he offered prayers for the dead and returned home. He complained that he was suffering from headache. He grew weaker day by day and his illness became severe. He moved to the apartment of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'isha (Allāh be pleased with her) with the consent of his other wives. He was supported by his cousin, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, and Faḍl bin 'Abbās (Allāh be pleased with them). During his illness, he went to the Mosque and addressed the congregation: "O Believers! If among you there be one whose back I may have struck, here is my back, so that he himself may do justice. If there be one whose honour I may have injured, here is my honour, let him take revenge. If there is one whose property I may have seized, here is my property, let

him satisfy his claim. Let no one hesitate for fear of my resentment, for resentment forms no part of my disposition." In the meantime, a man arose and claimed payment of a meagre debt. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) paid his debt and said, "It is easier to put up with shame in this world than in the other. Every person is doomed to die. I cannot dwell eternally among you. I must return to Allāh and you likewise shall return to Him." After this, he lost his consciousness. When the call of the *Mu'adhdhin* was heard, he regained his senses. He asked for water and performed his ablution to lead the prayers. He directed Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) to perform the duties of the Imām. The crowd broke out into fits of sobbing at this change. He, then, offered his prayers, sitting to the right of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him). On his return from the Mosque, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) sat down with his body reclining on the arms of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'isha (Allāh be pleased with her). His eyes fell on 'Abdul Raḥmān bin Abū Bakr who had a *Miswāk* in his hand. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'isha (Allāh be pleased with her) immediately understood what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) desired. He gave it to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). He cleansed his teeth with it vigorously and then placed it down. Once before his passing away, he whispered into the ears of Ḥaḍrat Fātima (Allāh be pleased with her). At first, her face was bathed in tears. Then, a smile played on her lips. She was later asked as to the cause of her

changed expression. She replied "The first time as my father warned me that he would die of illness, I could not control my tears. The second time as he informed that I would be the first to rejoin him in Paradise, so great was my joy that I could not help smiling." The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) frequently seized with delirium. He regained his senses and repeated these words thrice: "O' Allāh! Take me to the position of the superior friend". After this, he breathed his last on 12 Rabi'-ul-Awwal, 11 A.H.

Hadrat Abu Bakr Elected: Before attending to the task of the funeral, it was evidently urgent to guard against the pressing danger threatening the very existence of Islam after the passing away its inspired guide. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr was chosen to be the first Caliph of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him).

The Burial of the Holy Prophet: Soon after the demise of the illustrious Benefactor of mankind (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) proceeded towards the apartment of his Master, and removing the sheet from the august face, he kissed the forehead. The tears were following upon his cheeks. In the meantime, he saw Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (Allāh be pleased with him) addressing the people thus: "The hypocrites say that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) has died. I swear by Allāh that he has not died but has gone to Allāh like Prophet Mūsa (peace be upon him) who had returned

after an absence of forty days, in spite of the fact that the people said that he had been died. In the same way, our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) shall return.” Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) cited the relevant Verses from the Holy Qur’ān and convinced Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar (Allāh be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had passed away. The washing of the sacred body of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was done by Ḥaḍrat ‘Ali, Usama, ‘Abbās and Shukran (Allāh be pleased with them). Ḥaḍrat ‘Abbās and ‘Ali, then, perfumed every part of the sacred body. Instead of a shroud, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was wrapped in the garment he wore at the moment of his demise. Ḥaḍrat ‘Ali and ‘Abbās (Allāh be pleased with them) placed the sacred body of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) on his bed and allowed the crowd to enter the apartment and have his last glimpse. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and ‘Umar (Allāh be pleased with them) stood in the front rank of the devotees and concluded the funeral prayers with these words :

“O’ Allāh ! We bear witness that he accomplished Mission, Thou entrusted to him. O’ Allāh ! Grant peace to those among us who faithfully follow the commandments revealed to him and hasten to reunite us with him. *Amin!*”

The grave was dug by Ḥaḍrat Talha (Allāh be pleased with him) at the place where Allāh had seized

his noble soul. Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, Fadl, Quthan and Shukran (Allāh be pleased with them) lowered the body into its last resting place. Early in the morning, while announcing the call to prayer, Ḥaḍrat Bilāl (Allāh be pleased with him) proclaimed: "I bear witness there is no god but Allāh and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allāh." He could only shout the name of Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) through sobs. The whole locality began to wail and shed tears. A prolonged moan of despair and sorrow rose to heaven from the depth of every heart.

The Prophet's Conduct in Life : The noble life of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) presented the true picture of the Qur'ānic teachings in respect of his conduct. An orphan and a poor man by birth had become the Head of State by God's benevolent grace. He had the wealth of the world at his feet, but he lived a very simple life. He gave himself no preference to others. He was a humble creature of God. Whenever some man wished to kiss his hands, he withdrew them, remarking that this was the behaviour of the non-Arabs towards their kings. Even if a slave extended to him an invitation, he would accept it. His diet was simple. He had a special liking for honey and marrow. He wore simple dress. He did not mind putting on patched garments. He was very particular about the neatness of his clothes. His dwelling consisted of a few small rooms made of mud bricks, having a bedstead and a jar of water. Although he generally ate barley bread and dates, yet he fed thousands of

people with generosity. He would take pains to entertain his guests as best as he could. He would wait in person upon them. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) never disappointed a beggar. He would not make a flat refusal. He would feed the hungry, himself going without food. He never kept money in his possession. His heart overflowed with mercy even for the dumb creatures of God. The Holy Prophet's generosity even towards his mortal enemies stands unique. He was the well-wisher even of his adversaries and prayed to God to bless them with His Divine Guidance. He endured the hardships of life patiently with a smiling face. He shared the sorrows and sufferings of the widows and the orphans. He always stood by the oppressed. He vindicated the rights of women over men, that of slaves over their masters and those of the ruled over the rulers. He was very kind to children. While walking along, he would pat them affectionately. He would visit the sick to enquire after their health and console them. He never used indecent language. He never uttered a harsh word. He was polite and tender-hearted. Forgiveness was an outstanding trait of the character of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). He had a great regard for the elders. He would spread his own mantle for them to sit on. Although he was humble and meek, he had the courage of the bravest of men. When he had to fight his enemies, he showed remarkable determination and perseverance. He did even justice to all without making any distinction between a friend and a foe.

He inspired brotherhood among the savage, illiterate and warring people. His noble teachings went a long way in removing national, racial and colour distinctions. He was possessed of untiring energy. He was never careless, negligent or reckless. He never told a lie throughout his life or misled any one. He was sent unto mankind with the truth to confirm the Truth. He was never upset by reverses or obstacles in his path. He was the most patient and persevering man that ever lived. He had merged his will into the Will of God. He worked for none but for God Who bestowed upon him an everlasting grandeur.

Some Glorious Sayings of The Holy Prophet :

1. Allāh has no mercy on him who is not merciful to his fellow-men.
2. God admits to Heaven a man who is tolerant and fair.
3. He is not a perfect Muslim who eats to his belly-fill while his neighbour is hungry.
4. The ink used by the scholar is holier than blood of the martyr.
5. None of you hath faith unless he desireth for his brother that he desireth for himself.
6. The Muslims are interconnected to one another as the parts of a structure, one part of which strengthens the other.
7. Fear the prayer of the oppressed, because there is no curtain between him and God.

8. Beware! Verily, there is a piece of flesh in the body of man which when it keeps good, the whole body is good, and when it goes bad, the whole body is bad and it is the heart.
9. That person is nearest to God who forgives him who has injured him.
10. I have left two things among you, and you shall not go astray so long as you hold them fast. One is the Book of God and the other the Sunnah of his Messenger (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him).
11. The most excellent holy war is that for the conquest of the self.
12. A man who repents on his faults sincerely is like him who has committed none.
13. Do not find fault with others.
14. Jealousy and suspicion disintegrate society.
15. The proud will not enter the blissful abode.
16. Modesty and chastity are parts of the Faith.
17. Every good deed is charity and it is a good deed that you meet your brother with a smiling face and that you pour water from the bucket into the pot of your brother.
18. The best of alms is that which you give with the right hand and the left hand is unaware.
19. Guard yourself against six things and I stand as your surety for Paradise. When you speak. Speak the truth: fulfil when you

promise ; discharge your trust ; be chaste in thoughts and deeds ; and abstain from striking and taking which is unlawful and bad.

The Holy Prophet in the Opinions of Non-Muslims:

1. "Muhammad's unique position in religious history is due to the fact that he inspired all he did without being a saint or an angel, without having any attributes which were not strictly human. Outside his tremendous personality, he had nothing in life to distinguish himself from other Muslims."

(The Messenger by R.V.C. Bodley)

2. "Judged by the smallness of the means at his disposal and the extent and permanence of the work he accomplished, no name in the world's history shines with a more specious lustre than that of the Prophet of Mecca".

(Islam and its Founder by W. H. Stobart)

3. "It is a vulgar opinion that 'Mahomet propagated his Doctrine by the sword', and not only compelled the Arabians at first to receive his Religion but obliged his successors by a perpetual vow. But how generally so ever this be believed and how great so ever they be who support it, yet it is no other than a palpable mistake. It is very true that Mahomet did levy wars in Arabia but it was with the object of restoring an old Religion, not to introduce a new one. He taught his followers to abolish idolatry everywhere and

that all the world was obliged to the profession of these truths. But that all mankind were to be forced to the profession of his Religion or that he compelled any therets, is a falsehood." (*D.S. Margoliouth*)

4. "But in the case of Islam, there can be no mistake. True, the Arabs in themselves were a great and virile people. But it was the genius of Muhammad, the spirit he breathed into them through the soul of Islam that exalted them. That raised them out of the lethargy and low level of tribal stagnation."

(*Islam, Her Moral and Spiritual Value*
by *Arthur Leonard*)

5. "We might call him a poet or a prophet for we feel that the words which he speaks are not the words of an ordinary man. They have their immediate source in the inner reality of things, since he lives in constant fellowship with this reality."

(*Muhammad by Andrae*)

6. "In little more than a year he was actually the spiritual, nominal and temporal ruler of Medina with his hand on the lever that was to shake the world."

(*Muhammad, the Prophet of Allāh by John*
Austin)

7. Mahomed established his religious system in a manner not only suitable to the sentiments of his compatriots, to their understanding

and to the dominating customs of their country, but beyond this, so proportioned to the common ideas of mankind that he converted more than one half of all human beings to his opinion and all this in less than forty years. Thus it seemed sufficient to cause the doctrine to be heard too, thereby subjecting the minds to it."

*(La vie de Mahomed : Amsterdam by
Boulainvilliers)*

8. "Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) is by many seen only through the fog which dread and ignorance have spread around him. To them he is an object of horror against which anything evil might be said. But now the mists of prejudice have cleared away. We can afford to see the founder of Islam in a fairer light."

*(The Permanent Elementary in Religion
by Bishop Boyd Carpenter)*

9. "It is strongly corroborative of Mohammad's sincerity that the earliest converts to Islam were his bosom friends and the people of his house-hold who all intimately acquainted with his private life could not fail to detect those discrepancies which more or less invariably exist between the pretensions of the hypocritical deceiver and his actions at home."

*(An Apology for Muhammad and the Qur'ān
by John Davenport)*

10. "I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today undisputed sway over the hearts of millions mankind. I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle".

(Mahatma Gandhi)

11. "Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allāh bē upon him) was the soul of kindness and his influence was left and never forgotten by those around him"

(The Prophets of the East by Diwan Chand Sharma)

12. That his Muhammad's reforms enhanced the status of women, in general, is universally admitted.

(Mohammedanism by H. A. R. Gibb)

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